

What's Next? Podcast

Josey Sechrist

[Snip-it's from Podcast] Josey: I love middle schoolers like they are truly the best, high schoolers are cool, and I really, like, strongly consider teaching high school. But honestly, probably the biggest contributors to me choosing middle over high school are number one, I look super young. So honestly, the idea of teaching high school to me was super daunting because like, how am I going to get a bunch of kids to listen to me when I look like I'm like their age, you know what I mean? So that was that just felt like impossible. [Chuckles]

[Bouncy theme music plays.]

[Introduction] Welcome to the What's Next? podcast. Let me just start off by saying. Not everyone has the same background. There is no road-map for success. Life begins at the end of your comfort zone. Leaning into your curiosities. It does suck when you grow up. We're all still figuring out who we are. You can't just sit back and be silent. Black lives matter. It is the little stuff that makes the biggest difference. Do you have another hour? [Laughs]

Cody: Hello, Beaver Nation, welcome to the What's Next? podcast, I'm your host, Cody Stover. Our guest today is passing the torch of education on to the next generation. She is a 2016 graduate from Oregon State with a degree in math and international studies, also minored in Spanish at OSU. She then went on to get her Masters of Arts and Education from Stanford and now teaches math to seventh and eighth graders at McGlaughlin Middle School. We want to hear about all of that and more. But without further ado, I want to introduce you to Josey Sechrist, thanks for joining us on the What's Next? podcast.

Josey: All right. Thanks for having me, Cody. Excited to be here.

Cody: Yeah, I'm excited to dive in. My parents were teachers or my mom was a teacher. My dad worked at a school. So I'm interested to dive into your experience being a teacher. But also, I wanted to start first with a place that I think a lot of our

listeners have in common. And this is a place we start with most of our guests. And that's your time at Oregon State. So you were at Oregon State from 2012 to 2016. Take me back to why you chose OSU in the first place.

Josey: Oh, man. Yeah. Gosh, feels so long ago. Yeah. When I was deciding where to go to school, I originally was hoping to be an engineer. And so most of the programs I was looking at were very focused, most the schools I was looking at, were very focused on engineering and had strong, strong engineering departments. And so that was a big part of my decision to go to Oregon State. It was out of state for me, but part of the reason I picked OSU was because I got a pretty substantial scholarship. So it made it a lot more financially feasible to go to an out-of-state school. I'm from Washington originally so it was a bummer to have to pay out-of-state tuition to just be like right across the river in Vancouver. But, yeah, the scholarships made it a lot more manageable and it was relatively close to home, which was definitely a consideration for me because I'm pretty close to my mom. So it's only a two hour drive from home, which was really helpful. Yeah, it was a big, big part of the choice.

Cody: How was your experience at OSU? And maybe you can take us through some of the stuff that you're involved with there so we can get some background on kind of your experience?

Josey: Yeah, totally. So like I said, I was originally at Oregon State as an engineering major. I always enjoyed math and science and really was interested in following through as an engineer. But in my first year there, I was in this Engineering 101 class and I remember my professor was such a wonderful human and she was so nice and she had worked at HP her whole life. And I'll never forget she was talking one day about her job at HP forever and how basically her whole life was spent making printer parts. So she wasn't even making like whole printers. You know, she was making parts of printers, which is super important. I'm not trying to demean that, but hearing her talk about that just really cemented for me the fact that, like, engineering wasn't going to be for me and I really wanted to work more with people. And so I really struggled for a couple of quarters. I didn't know what I should major in or what I should do. And I was just stressed about the amount of money I was spending, not knowing what I wanted to pursue. And I think for a long time, being a teacher was a thought that had crossed my mind. But I have received so many messages just from the media and from family and

just that teaching is not like a prestigious enough field for me [Cody: Mmm.] to go into, basically for a lot of my life. Anyway, eventually I overcame that and just realized, like, do what you want to do. Your life is about yourself and about what you love. And if you love people, then do something that's with people. And so I decided to go with math because I always loved math and felt very comfortable in my knowledge of math and still felt I guess there was a little bit of that leftover feeling of wanting to follow the prestige. And so I felt good about getting a degree in math and having a focus in education, which I think was a little bit I wonder if I went back now, if I would have thought of teaching something different. But I really, really loved teaching math. It's like such an access point for students of color and for girls especially. And it's just really empowering to be a woman of color as a teacher and to know that I'm able to be someone that my students look to as someone who looks like them both as a female and as a woman of color in particular. So, yeah, I definitely feel very empowered in my in my job choice. And I'm really glad that I was able to come to that conclusion.

I was also in the Honors College, which was a really awesome experience at Oregon State. It just gives you the opportunity to be in smaller classes. And I was able I mean, it was awesome and also horrible that I had to write a thesis. [Cody: Chuckles] So it was so much work.

Cody: Two sides to the coin.

Josey: Yes, exactly. And it's cool to have, like, a piece of work like that for sure. And it was relevant. I had my thesis was on language as a barrier in math education, so it was super relevant to what I cared about and my mentor, Mary Bicego is like absolutely the person who supported me most in my time at Oregon State and honestly, the reason I ended up going to Stanford, because without her, I wouldn't have even applied. I honestly just did not think there was any chance for me to get in and wouldn't have even considered applying there, but with her encouragement, I did and had a great experience in grad school. So it's really cool. But at Oregon State, I overall had a really good time there in general. I was pretty involved. I was a member of Greek life and active in ASOSU. But to be honest, I was pretty disappointed in the lack of social justice exposure and critical conversations about inequality and about race, especially inequality. I guess, in regards to race, gender, sexual orientation. I don't feel like I had enough of that at Oregon State. And quite frankly, I think that that should have been

present in any major. I know I'm not I wasn't a social sciences major, but I think I should have been relevant in mathematics education. And I'm pretty disappointed with a lack that I saw there. It's definitely something I wish I could go back and change. And if I had the opportunity to do it again, I probably would have taken more classes focused on the social sciences and on inequalities in that way. But yeah, definitely, definitely had a good experience overall. I just think that there could definitely be some improvements there, and especially with the fact that Oregon was founded as a safe haven for folks who are in the KKK.

Cody: Right.

Josey: And and was founded as a white only state. And that is something that needs to be critically analyzed and is not something that I found in my experience there, which was certainly a disappointment.

But, yeah, it definitely presented some great opportunities for me in a lot of ways. And ASOSU, I was able to lobby in Washington, D.C. for the needs of students, which was really awesome. We were advocating for more funding for Pell Grants and for just education in general, which was very empowering and awesome. But again, I just don't think there was enough of that critical lens in the ASOSU Senate or in ASOSU in general to really think about how this school was serving the needs of its students of color and of its marginalized communities. So I think there's definitely some improvement to be done. And I wonder what work has been done since I've left.

Cody: Yeah. Thanks so much for sharing your story, too. And on those topics, one thing, if you don't mind me asking to a listener who is thinking about these things, and certainly as the last few months have evolved in our country and these topics of race and racial injustice are, are very much on the forefront of what we're thinking about. So for somebody who's kind of thinking about these things for the first time, I guess what would be your recommendation or what do you think they should do to try to keep thinking about these things, whether it's a student who's coming to Oregon State or considering Oregon State or somebody who has gone to Oregon State and maybe didn't know or didn't have that exact same lens, like what would you encourage those people to be thinking about now as we kind of move forward?

Josey: Yeah, that's a great question. I think it really number one, it's important to know that if you are coming to the table, that's step one, right. You have to educate yourself and start somewhere. And I know that there's a lot of sentiments of frustration, especially in communities of color that I've experienced myself of kind of this, this feeling of like white guilt that's kind of being put on to folks of color. And so if you're feeling guilty and feeling like this is a lot to process and it's hard to figure out, that's super normal and it's OK. But please do not put that onto people of color as you're processing and learning and beginning this journey. Find white allies who are maybe further along in the process who can support you just because folks of color are in really different places with, with grappling with this and with kind of just seeing where other folks are in their journeys. And so I just think it's super important to keep in mind that it's not the work of people of color and especially of black folks to educate others, whether you're a person of color or not. And so just to kind of be searching for that on your own and to do that research yourself using the resources you have and especially leaning on the other white allies that may be in your life who can support you as well in that journey. Definitely I mean shoot, just Google search how to be anti-racist. Honestly, just that is going to help you a lot. [Cody: Mhm]

One thing I highly recommend is an article by I think it's Peggy Macintosh's that her name. I can look it up, but it's called unpacking the it's a white privilege, 'Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack'. [Cody: Mhm] And it's a really, really great article. I mean, honestly, even if you just begin by reading her statements of her own privilege, she's a white woman who wrote it. It's such a great place to start. My partner and I, my partner is a white man, and he, he read through it with me and it was just so empowering to have that conversation with him about which ones of which parts of privilege really resonated with him as a person, as a white person in particular. And just seeing his willingness to acknowledge that and to fight the good fight and to be anti-racist every day is super helpful. So, yeah, definitely acknowledge where you're at and ask for help, but just make sure you're asking for help from the right people and do your own work to you know, it's super easy. We have so much access to Internet these days. You just do a Google search, how to be anti-racist or white privilege, white fragility and just support in any way that you can.

Cody: Yeah, I actually am reading the How to be an Anti-racist currently by Ibram X. Kendi.

Josey: Awesome.

Cody: And as a white male myself, yeah, it's been a great place for me to start and to start diving into some of these topics and doing a lot of introspection on how, you know, my privilege plays out on a day to day basis and things that I maybe wasn't even thinking of when I was at Oregon State and how it played into my experience. So, yeah, I appreciate you Josey sharing those sentiments, too. And I'm excited to continue the conversation on that too.

Josey: Yeah, same. And I just have to say how much I, I just want to echo this fact that just because privilege exists doesn't mean I mean, I'm not saying that white folks it's their fault that their privileged you know, you didn't ask for the system to benefit you, but it's important for us to recognize who the systems are benefiting [Cody: Mhm] to be able to, if we can't acknowledge it, we're not going to be able to change it to be more just so it's not supposed to be an attack. And I know it can be hard. I mean, honestly, I, I'm a woman of color, but I got something that I like to call ethnic ambiguity privilege, which I've talked about a lot with some of my friends. When people look at me, they don't know how to stereotype me. They don't know what box to put me in. And it's very unclear what my background is. And a lot of ways that has afforded me a lot of privilege because people don't place particular expectations on me because of their ideas about my race. And so I think I've benefited from a lot of like light skin and like an ambiguity privilege in a lot of ways. And again, I didn't ask for that. I didn't ask to look how I do, but I benefited from it, certainly. And so that's it's an important, an important part to consider is you may not have created that system or asked for that system to benefit you, but it's there and it does. And what can we do to help the folks who are being disenfranchised and who are being actively disadvantaged by those systems?

Cody: Yeah, and I want to pick this back up real quick as we transition here. I just wanted to, so to catch us up on the timeline to where we are now as far as your journey post college. So you get your master's at Stanford, you come back. And did you? Were you always looking for a middle school job or how did you kind of land that? Catch us back up to speed on that, too.

Josey: After graduating from Stanford, I moved back to Vancouver. I wanted to move home and teach in my community and be here in the place that I grew up. So I currently teach at McGlaughlin, which is a middle school in the district I grew up in. So it's not the actual middle school I went to, but it's in the same district and yeah, in deciding between middle and high. So I'm qualified to teach middle or high school and the decision was actually easier than I thought it would be. I for so long, so many people, some people hate middle schoolers. [Chuckles]

Cody: I look back at my middle school self and I'm like, I don't know if I want to revisit that exactly.

Josey: Yes, OK, that's not so fair. Like, you could not pay me enough to be a middle schooler again, but I love hanging out with middle schoolers. They are truly the best, which is so funny because everyone says how angsty they are and how horrible they could be and their attitudes and blah, blah, blah. But I love middle schoolers like they are truly the best. High schoolers are cool and I really like strongly consider teaching high school. But honestly, probably the biggest contributors to me choosing middle over high school, are number one, I look super young. So honestly, the idea of teaching high school to me was super daunting because like, how am I going to get a bunch of kids to listen to me when I look like I'm like their age, you know what I mean? So that was that just felt like impossible. And then also middle school. I liked middle school, especially as a math teacher. The idea of it, at least just because to me, thinking back to my middle school self and my high school self in middle school, I was still like really forming my own identity in regards to, like who I was as a learner and who I was as a as a human. And we're all still figuring out who we are as we go, but especially in to how I was as a learner. And so I think part of the reason I chose middle school is because to me, as a teacher, I thought that, teaching middle school left more room to convince kids that they can be good at math, whereas in high school, I think a lot of kids have already decided, like, oh, I'm bad at math, even though that's a fallacy in itself. It's that's really hard to combat. So I was kind of hoping I'd catch more kids earlier. You know, like before they kind of had instilled that as a as like a core belief about themselves, like in a hope that I could kind of like push back against that and tell them like, no, you're a math person, everyone's a math person and everyone has the ability to learn math. And if you had bad experiences before, that's OK. But doesn't mean that you're not you're not a

mathematician because everyone is. So, yeah, anyway that was a big part of the decision for middle versus high.

[Bouncy theme music plays.]

Cody: Hey, listeners, do you know of a Beaver grad with a unique story to tell? We'd love to hear about it. To suggest a guest to be featured on the What's Next? podcast, fill out the submission form by visiting osualum.com/OSUNext or by following the link in the show notes. There's no one size fits all path to life after college and we look forward to sharing more Beaver alum stories. Now back to the show.

[Bouncy theme music plays.]

Cody: So when and how long have you been teaching at McLaughlin, has it been two or three years now?

Josey: Yeah, this is the end of my third year teaching.

Cody: OK, gotcha. So how is the experience been over the last few years or how has that evolved? I know we talked about a bit about your time at Oregon State when you came to the real world, you came to this job setting. What did you kind of find there?

Josey: Oh, my goodness. Well, if there's any, like, aspiring teachers listening, I just got to tell you, the first year is rough, but you will get through it. I remember I will never forget my third day of school. One of my practices is to get kids to listen as I count down from five, right. So I like I need your eyes and ears in five, four, three, two, one, zero. And you count slower, obviously, but when you get to zero, one of the things I would do is when I get to zero, if they're still talking, I would go negative one, negative two and you start counting negative until they stop. And so like the first time my first year teaching, I just so unreasonably expected them to do this perfectly the first time. [Laughing] Because, because when I when I took over again, I took over my classroom. It's like, well, all these kids already know how to do this. Why wouldn't any other group of kids just know how to do this, which is just so completely unreasonable with a group of brand new eighth graders to expect them to get quiet at zero. And they're like they're not going to do that. They're excited to see their friends.

Cody: Right.

Josey: And so that was such a steep learning curve my first year. And I think I literally got to like negative 70 seconds, like it was so bad. [Cody: Laughing] I was so frustrated. I didn't understand why. And, you know, like, you just need those like a horrible learning experiences to realize, OK, like this is a learning process for me and for them, you know. So my second year was so much smoother because the first day of school I did that. I did the five, four, three, two, one zero and like negative six or whatever. And they finally stopped talking. And I was like, oh, man, yo, that's six that negative six seconds, we means we got to stay after class for six seconds [Cody: Ooo] and they're finally quiet and listening, and you know, and they're like *gasp*, and I'm like do you want to stay after for six seconds? And they're like, uh-huh, oh, no way, no way. I'm like, yeah, yo, I don't want you to say after either. [Cody: Chuckling] That sounds horrible for you and me. So let's try it again. And if you can get quiet at zero with no negative this time, then I'll erase the six because you're still learning. They're like oh, Ok, ok, ok. You know they get like so excited and so I'm like okay so everybody talk and they like go wild and you know they're not even talking they're like screaming and like saying, you know, they need that grace and that space to learn it. And the first year teacher doesn't realize that. Yeah. So it's gotten a lot better.

Cody: Right there you just told us about your teaching experience and we didn't even dive into the subject. A lot of us who go into, quote on quote, a normal job, you study your thing. I studied marketing. You go into your job, you start doing your marketing. You studied math, and that's your expertise and you're teaching it. But look at this giant factor that you have also to deal with, is that on day one, instead of just doing your basic onboarding things that you would do on a job, you have thirty eyes that are looking, you know, thirty sets of eyes that are looking at you in a classroom and you have to immediately become a manager of those thirty people. So, yeah, that's amazing. Just to hear all the ins and outs of not only are you teaching the subject matter, but you are being this this manager and also this mentor to these kids. [Josey: Yeah, yeah] So that's amazing to hear.

Josey: So thank you. Yeah. I appreciate you recognizing that. Yeah. It is certainly so much more than teaching math concepts. It's just such, and I mean, that's why it's so

rewarding, right. Look, I didn't I didn't get into teaching math just because I was like, math is the best subject ever. You know, I got into teaching math because of humans. And I love kids and I want them to know that they're important and they matter. And and, you know, some days honestly, some days, I mean that you're not focused on learning math. That means you're taking care of yourself. And a lot of these kids are dealing with a lot of trauma. And quite frankly, if you're dealing with that, sometimes what you need, certainly sometimes what you need is a distraction. And using content as a distraction can be helpful. And I honestly, that's another benefit of middle school that I don't think I even realized before choosing it. But there are far fewer stresses in middle school as a teacher because there are no high school graduation requirements. Right. So, I mean, the content is certainly so important, but I can feel OK about focusing on social and emotional learning above content some days. And I think I don't know how I would feel if I were teaching high school. That's really that's really hard. That's a hard choice to have to make as a high school teacher. And I can feel good about making that as a middle school teacher because so much of my job, I feel is not just teaching math, but teaching them to be humans, you know, and that's what's so yeah, that's one thing that I love about working with kids. I can't it's so funny because it's hard in so many ways, of course. But I can't imagine working with adults because, you know, if an adult says like a derogatory term for somebody else, like I'm just going to be pissed and want to like and it feels like hopeless. [Cody: Mhm] Like it feels like they have no chance of getting better. Whereas with kids, if one of my kids is a derogatory term, certainly I like send them out of class and make it clear to everybody else that I'm not OK with that, and I like Miss Sechrist doesn't get mad that often, and so when I do, kids are like, oh what? So they, they leave and they are like, oh, God, something bad is going to happen. But, you know, just send a message to the whole class of like we don't talk like that. We absolutely do not talk like that to each other in this space. And but then, you know, when I go outside to talk to this kid, I'm saying like, hey, do you like why do you say that? What did you mean? Like what know? And that's the opportunity for them to learn. Like, that's when kids are learning how to interact with people in an appropriate way. And it's so that's such an empowering thing to work with kids at that stage. Because when a kid says something like that, I know that it's their opportunity to learn, you know. And so the way you handle it is super important. Like, it's not going to be helpful for me to go to them and say, hey, do you realize how bad that is? Like you're a bad person. The point they're not a bad person. They're a, they're a kid learning. And so if you say a derogatory term, certainly I'm going to send you out of class and have you

know that that's not OK. And that's, that's my expectation is you don't get to talk like that. But I'm also going to give you the opportunity to learn and grow and give you the give you the chance to be better. I expect you to be better, you know.

Cody: Mm hmm. As you have these relationships with these kids and you're their teacher for the year and maybe even two years, I'm not sure if you both seventh and eighth there. But so with, with that in consideration, as you're kind of like this role model person or and we do have in society these topics coming back up as we were talking earlier about race and gender and sexuality inequalities around this and the injustices around this and the problems that seem to be very systemic in a lot of our institutions and especially schools and things. How do you talk to students and other teachers about, about these topics?

Josey: Yeah, such a great question. Actually, that's something that's been super helpful for me this summer. I have a group of colleagues. Well, actually, they're really folks I went to grad school with and we're actually meeting weekly in a group called Decolonizing Mathematics. And so we are just meeting on Zoom and working through how we can build social justice topics into our math curriculum in a more cohesive way. [Cody: Mhm] Just because math, so many people say that math is neutral and quite frankly, it's not. If you just look at like IQ scores and the eugenics that have resulted from just that, math is not neutral. Math has been used as a tool against, against marginalized communities. And I need to actively show my kids the fact that having a knowledge of math gives you opportunities that you wouldn't have otherwise. And so it's really important to have to give kids that opportunity and for them to really have that ability to learn the content in a way that they're going to be engaged with.

As far as having conversations with students about race that comes up, that certainly comes up naturally when we have particular, particular lessons that are focused on social justice issues. But mostly, to be honest, I've had conversations with kids about race like one on one. So a lot of it's been when kids are facing racism in their community or even at school in particular, and it's like having a lunchtime talk about it and giving them the space to process and, and get through it. And I have a couple students who have since moved to high school who I'm still in contact with, who have asked me, like, how do I get involved? What like where can I learn more? And that kind of stuff. And so it's really helpful to have those, those strong one on one relationships,

because that's where kids feel comfortable enough to ask you and to and to want to have that conversation. So that's been super helpful.

And in regards to colleagues, [clears throat] excuse me, in regards to colleagues, one of the big ways that I've had an opportunity to engage in conversations about inequity has been through my union. So the Vancouver Education Association, the VEA, this year was one of the vice presidents of the union in charge of equity affairs. This year was mainly focused on giving opportunities for teachers of color to come together and just talk. So just how socials for teachers of color. We've since expanded into other marginalized communities and have a member who's focused explicitly on LGBTQ, LGBTQIA+ community. And then we're also hoping to recruit folks who are differently abled and also to focus on ageism in our district in particular. And so that's all kind of where we're going.

But one of the probably like biggest successes of this year, I would say, with the equity team, was we had an equity event. And so we had gotten some feedback from some educators of color that we had this we had this event previously every year that was like a diversity event it's like a celebration. And a lot we received some feedback from a few folks that felt a little more tokenistic than useful. And so we decided to kind of shift it be more of a learning experience rather than like a quote on quote, celebration, and so it turned out super well. We got a lot of positive feedback, a lot but we basically we had dinner and we had this opportunity to engage in conversation after watching this video that was created by The New York Times. It's called A Conversation with Latinos on Race. And they have a whole series. So it's created for educators and it's just basically to facilitate having conversations about race in the classroom. And I honestly would highly recommend the series to anybody who is just wanting to learn more. And I think it was just super important for us to have this opportunity for folks to engage with other people in their district and to have a conversation about race. It's not an easy thing to do, but it's important. And if we're going to facilitate if we're going to facilitate those kinds of events, then hopefully it's going to lead folks to want to do that with their students and with their peers as teachers at schools in particular. So, yeah, it's really exciting. I think there's going to be a lot of momentum moving forward next year. We're hoping to create in-building equity teams so that every single school has their own equity team. We have an event we have an event subgroup that's going to continue planning those socials for different groups of folks. And then we're also doing a having a

committee focused on just analyzing our governing documents as an organization with an equity lens just because a lot of it hasn't been explicitly looked at with that with that goal. So just going through and seeing what needs to be changed or updated and how we can better reflect equity as an organization in those governing documents.

So, yeah, it's really exciting. It's been really empowering. More recently with the murder of George Floyd and Brianna Taylor and so many, so many others, we've had a couple of opportunities for teachers to engage in activism and have had Black Lives Matter sign waving event organized by our organization and then other school in our district organized one themselves that we kind of supported and went to. So that's been super helpful as well. Just having these opportunities to engage in the process with other educators has been very empowering and important, I think. Yeah, so I hope I answered your question. Sorry, I was kind of long winded.

Cody: That's wonderful. And thanks, Josey for sharing on all that, too. And, you know, and, and for sharing your experience to being an advocate in that that situation in the system of the school district and the broader situation with kids in schools and with other teachers. And so, yeah, thanks so much for sharing all that.

Josey: Yeah. Thank you. And it's, it's been really very empowering and I think honestly so important, especially because last year in October of 2019 Vancouver School District, the district I work for, received a notice from the Attorney General's Office of Washington State that we disproportionately discipline students of color and students with disabilities. So we're basically, we've been exposed as a racist, as a, at least certainly, a discriminatory system in regards to our discipline policies. And so it's so relevant. This is not just this abstract idea that's happening in general in districts across America. Like this is happening in my school district. [Cody: Mhm] They basically found that there's higher rates of suspension and expulsion for a Black, Native American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students. And this is super alarming because all of those all of those students are only making up 5.5 percent of students in our entire district. [Cody: Mhm] Yet they're being disproportionately disciplined. So if you don't mind, I have some statistics I'd love to share with [Cody: Yeah] you in regards to my district in particular. And then also just about like the school to prison pipeline in general.

Cody: Definitely.

Josey: So basically in my district, in the 2017-2018 year, only 4.9 percent of White students were suspended or expelled, [clears throat] excuse me, while 11.5 percent of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander folks were suspended or expelled. 10.9 percent of Black students, 8.5 percent of Native American students. So especially with Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander and Black students, you're basically twice as likely to be suspended [Cody: Mhm] over a White student. And so since then, the district has hired Daniel Lawson and he's the director of the Center for Civil Rights Remedies at UCLA. And so he's investigating and helping us create a plan moving forward. But it's honestly pretty discouraging. It definitely [Cody: Mhm] feeds into the idea of the school to prison pipeline. And it's hard to be working in a system that is racist. You know, I mean, public schooling in America is a racist system, it's been it's been studied, it's been proven, it's clear.

And for those who don't know the school to prison pipeline, it's kind of like a buzz term that folks have probably heard a lot recently. But the idea really, it's just it's a very real problem in public education. But it's really the idea that the increase of police presence in schools has led to student's first interaction with law enforcement and with the criminal justice system because of schooling. And so schools nationwide after the Columbine shooting have kind of shifted toward the inclusion of police officers in school, and particularly 1997 until 2007 the number of SROs [school resource officers] in school increased nearly a third. And again, this was the goal was to basically prevent mass school shootings, but really has eventually kind of led to the arrest of students while they're in school. So kids are getting arrested at school in just 2011, the 2011 - 2012 school year, and I was my junior year of high school, but so in that year alone, 92,000 students were arrested while on school grounds in the US. I mean, that's, that's so many kids [Cody: Mhm] getting arrested at school.

And so it's pretty it's just pretty mind boggling because this inclusion of police officers in school paired with zero tolerance policies, which basically leads to the immediate expulsion of students after one, any kind of offense. And then also this idea that students should be disciplined for more minor offenses as a way to discourage higher offenses has just led to a lot more discipline for things that are unnecessary. So kids are

getting suspended or even expelled for talking back or skipping class or being tardy or like a classic is defiance. People say that kids have oppositional defiance disorder, basically just saying that kids who are talking back are not doing exactly as they're told. Shouldn't it be in school, which is quite frankly, so ridiculous, because if a kid is being defiant and is refusing to do what you're asking, the question should be, why?, not get out. You know what I'm saying? [Cody: Mhm] It's just like the fact that the response to kids acting out is to send them away from school. What we're saying to kids is if, if you're behaving poorly, we don't want you here when really the kids who are behaving poorly need even more investment and care and love, you know what I mean? [Cody: Mhm]

So anyway, it's really alarming just because placing cops on school grounds is resulting in more students being arrested and being sent to juvenile court. And again, it all ties back to the fact that students nationwide are disproportionately being disciplined if they are students of color, right. [Cody: Mhm] So just this rise in discipline naturally means that there's a rise in students of color being funneled to prison from school because more of them are being disciplined than White students. And that being said, it also is really important to recognize that that's also true of students with disabilities. So Black students in the US constitute, and so I can also share the articles that I'm getting this from [Cody: Mhm] so you'll have to have [Cody: Yeah] the info, [Cody: Definitely] but most of this is from a Texas study, but they found that Black kids and this is actually nationwide. But Black kids constitute 18 percent of students nationwide, but they only account for or but they, I'm sorry. [starting over] Black students constitute 18 percent nationwide, but they are 46 percent of those suspended more than once, which is just obscene. About one in four Black children with disabilities were suspended at least once. One in four Black children with disabilities suspended at least one versus 1 in 11 White students with disabilities. [Cody: Mhm] So it's even worse for I mean, it's certainly already bad for students of color and it's also already bad for students with disabilities. But when you're a Black student with disabilities, I mean, holy smokes, it's crazy.

So this is also something I found super interesting. So... This idea that students are being disciplined for more minor offenses is also, again, disproportionately affecting students of color and especially Black kids. So this study found that White students were more likely to be disciplined for provable, documented offenses so like smoking or vandalism or like using poor language, those kinds of things that are like really clear,

clear cut. And like said explicitly in school policy that they need to be disciplined for. White students are a lot more likely to be disciplined for things like that, while Black students are a lot more likely to be disciplined for subjective things like defiance or disrespect, like I was saying. And so even if schools aren't I mean, schools are certainly already sending kids into the criminal justice system explicitly by arresting them and by also sending them to juvenile court. But even if they're not doing that, simply disciplining them at these higher rates makes it more likely that they will eventually end up in the criminal justice system because they are more likely to drop out. They're more likely to repeat a grade. And in this Texas study, they found that a student disciplined in middle or high school, 23 percent of those who were disciplined ended up in contact with a juvenile probation officer if they were a student of color. Whereas a student. I'm sorry, I'm sorry. That was wrong. A student disciplined, if you were disciplined at all in middle or high school, 23 percent of those students disciplined, ended up in contact with a juvie officer, but it's only two percent for those who were not disciplined. So just being disciplined at all means are more likely to end up like having some kind of contact with the criminal justice system in some way, [Cody: Mhm] which is, quite frankly, like all that's super overwhelming. I know that was a lot for me to say and to take in, but that's why it's so important for us to be having these conversations about race and for us to be critically thinking about our own implicit biases. I mean, I am certainly not exempt from that. We all have our own implicit biases that we bring into, into our jobs and our lives every day. But there are some pretty serious consequences as an educator.

Cody: Mm hmm. Yeah, thanks for sharing all that information, it made me proud to hear that those things really align for me and that you don't want kids to go to high school thinking that they aren't good at math. But you also don't want kids to be expelled for things you want them there and really appreciate you being a positive influence and fighting for these causes.

Josey: Thank you. I appreciate that, Cody.

Cody: OK, so I know we just got a few more minutes here. I want to do a couple fun, little segments here to end. But before we fully make that transition to kind of out of this episode, I wanted to also ask I know these are COVID times and that teaching looks a lot different right now. What how, how was being a teacher during COVID times when everything went digitally?

Josey: Oh, my gosh, do you have another hour? It was oh my gosh. I'm just in a nutshell, it was rough, just like getting kids. I mean, and it was rough. And we are a very fortunate district in that every single kid already has an iPad. And if they don't have Internet at home, they have the ability to get a hotspot for Wi-Fi. And it was still hard, you know, so we are super fortunate that way because I have friends who are teachers like in PPS, Portland Public, and they don't, you know, they don't have every kid doesn't have one on one devices. [Cody: Right] They're they don't have they don't have Wi-Fi hotspots. So we were fortunate in so many ways. But even there, it was just so hard. And so I was really lucky because our team was able to kind of create everything online, like as we went and broke everything up really evenly. The hardest part was just getting them to show up and to do the work, which, quite frankly, is totally fair. You know, we're in the middle of a global pandemic. The last thing you want to do is some math online. [Cody: Light chuckle] So I get it, you know. A lot of kids were in and out. And I mean, there are some kids I literally have not seen since April 13th. And it's just crazy. [Cody: Wow] I'll never know, like, why they didn't get to engage. I don't know if it's because [Cody: Mhm] they're stressed. I don't know if it's because they're they don't want to. I don't know if it's because they're not eating and they have bigger [Cody: Mhm] fish to fry. And it's hard. That's the hardest part. It's just it wasn't easy. I'm certainly glad it's summer, but I hope if any of my if any of my eighth grade students somehow hear this, which is highly unlikely. [Cody: Lightly chuckling] But if any of them ever hear this, my sweet, sweet baby angels, I love you and miss you so much. And I'm so sad we didn't get to the end of this year together. It was tough. It was definitely it was you know, it was especially frustrating because, again, like that first year, super hard second year, I started to figure it out a little more, but still pretty challenging. [Cody: Mhm] And this year I thought I really got my groove, you know what I mean? [Cody: Mhm] And I just had such fun classes. Oh, my gosh. Like, all of my classes were just like these incredible, hilarious, like, wonderful, like mismatch of kids. And so I'm just like, man are you kidding me? This is the year I had to, like, have the time cut short, like, come on, man. [Laughing] Oh, man.

Cody: Right. Of course, that had to be a global pandemic the year you were having a great time.

Josey: Yeah. Exactly! Oh my gosh. So real.

Cody: Well, I think I think as I, I don't have kids myself, but as I talked to a lot of coworkers who made the transition to work from home and then also made the transition to having their kids at home [Josey: Ooh] and getting them set up on school and things, I think I speak for all of us and saying we have mad respect. If we didn't already have mad respect for what you do, it's even more so now as people dealt with, with having their kids at home, [Josey: Yes] finding things for them to do and, and trying to help educate at the same time.

Josey: Yes, oh my gosh.

Cody: And we're thankful for all you.

Josey: Yeah. That was definitely one positive with seeing, like, all those teacher memes. [Cody: Laughing] You know, there were definitely some good ones, like fired like teacher fired for drinking on the job. It's like so classic. It was so good. [Cody: Oh] Just like being all these parents, like struggling. I definitely appreciate that. It definitely was validating to see [Cody: Uh-huh], gosh, I have so much respect, especially for the parents who are also teachers who were like having to teach their students and also their children. [Cody: Oh yeah] Oh my gosh.

Cody: Right

Josey: Like, just rough.

Cody: Ok, well, I want to use the last few minutes here to ask a few fun questions, a few quick hitters here. [Josey: All right.] So we can just learn a couple of extra things about Josey. So this first one is one that we've been asking all of our guests, and it is a section called What's Got You Hooked? And so this is whether you are a Netflix or Hulu Junkie, podcast super fan or maybe you're more of the reader type. [Josey: Ooo.] We have to know what's that form of content that you're just it's got you hooked right now?

Josey: Oh, my gosh. OK, well, I did I will say yesterday I listened to such a great episode of one of my favorite podcasts called Revisionist History. It's a podcast by Malcolm Gladwell. He's just super wonderful. I love that show. He has so many great

episodes and it's a lot of it's like in line with social justice issues. [Cody: Yeah] And he just does a great of analyzing them and his most recent book, actually on my list of tutoring covid, and it's called Talking to Strangers, and if you are not an audio book person, I would highly recommend you getting over it and listening to this one, because the audio quality of his book is so incredible. I mean he did it like a podcast, which is super cool because there are so many interviews where he actually talked with people like live in the book, which was super awesome. So would highly recommend revisionist history with Malcolm Gladwell and his most recent book, Talking to Strangers.

Cody: Ok, this next one is called What Are You Munching On? Since social distancing has us all chilling at home a lot more these days, what's been your go to food, whether it's a takeout spot or what's been that thing getting you through these times?

Josey: Ooo... Gosh, I love food so much. Honestly I have had, and I always do have, but especially in COVID I have had so much pizza, so much pizza. I love it. I can do like a Papa Murphy's XLNY or I can do like [Cody: Mhm] a buji wood fire pizza like I love it and I will continue to eat a lot of pizza. Always.

Cody: Love it. Yeah. I've definitely been unabashedly having Papa Murphy's. I have to give a shout out to my dad here too because he's a Papa Murphy super fan and I actually went to northern Italy with him, which should be some of the best pizza in the world. And, and I thought it was. But as he was eating it, he looked at me and said, you know, it's no Papa Murphy's.

Josey: [Gasp]

Cody: [Laughing]

Josey: Oh, my gosh, that's amazing.

Cody: So shout out Papa Murphy's, you know.

Josey: And shout out to Cody's dad. Oh, my gosh that's hilarious.

Cody: Yeah, yeah. [Laughing]

Josey: [Cody: Okay.] We are not sponsored by Papa Murphy's, but truly,

Cody: We're not, we're not sponsored but...

Josey: I love to be. I would do anything to be sponsored.

Cody: My dad might be sponsored by a Papa Murphy's.

Josey: [Laughing] That's awesome.

Cody: OK, this last one is a segment called Globe or Garage. [Josey: Mmmm.] So what that means is, is whether you're kind of the avid traveler or a proud homebody [Josey: Oooo] hence the globe or garage, when it's safe to travel again, what's a place that you're currently is on your travel bucket list? Or if you're more of the garage, what's a project or hobby that you're wanting to take on?

Josey: Oh, my gosh, I'm sorry. I'm going to be annoying and answer both because. [Cody: That's okay.] Because of COVID I've been a homebody. But I actually I bought a home relatively recently, last October, so my partner and I...

Cody: Congrats!

Josey: Thank you! My partner and I have been doing a lot of projects, so we've been doing a lot of projects, over COVID, which is super awesome, the most recent of which is not quite finished. So that's probably the project I'll say here is we're making like a little fire pit area in our backyard. So that is the goal to finish soon. We just need to get a little more gravel for it. So that has been a lot of fun. But as far as traveling goes, gosh, I haven't I haven't been abroad on a plane for too long. Probably, hmm, if I could go anywhere? My next trip would. Honestly, my really big dream is to go to Japan with my mom and with John, my partner. My mom is Japanese. She immigrated here just before having me. And I haven't been with her since fourth grade.

So I haven't been in general since fourth grade. But so I would love to go to Japan with my mom. I've been before. So I mean, a little part of me kind of wants to go to somewhere new, but I want to go with my mom so bad.

Cody: Ok, love it.

Well, thank you for giving us a little look under the hood a little bit more about your life. Appreciate that. Yeah. So as we wrap here, Josey just wanted to say thank you again for your time and wonderful to hear about all of your experiences from your time at Oregon State. And then also time becoming a teacher and then and then taking on teaching in a time where there's a lot of these issues of social justice. And I appreciate you sharing so much on those.

Josey: Thank you. Yeah. And thank you for giving me the opportunity to share. I hope I didn't lose too many people in my ramblings and rant, but thank you for listening and for having me. I'm really grateful for the opportunity to share about my experience. It's been it's been a lot of fun and it's always great to talk to you Cody.

Cody: Yeah, of course. And to all our listeners out there in Beaver Nation. We will see you next time.

[Bouncy theme music plays.]

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[Bouncy theme music fades.]

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