

## WFWP USA's virtual Global Women's Peace Network forum - Crisis in Education

Tina Pierce  
July 1, 2020



On July 1st, 2020, WFWP USA hosted the second virtual Global Women's Peace Network forum on the topic "Crisis in Education" (read [report](#)). What follows are some questions posed by the live audience that the speakers did not have time to answer during the session, but speaker Dr. Tina D. Pierce kindly took the time to send in written responses as well as links to helpful resources.

### **1. Can you address safety?**

School safety: Health officials are currently taking steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19 ("Coronavirus") in communities across the

country. The Department of Education recognizes the importance of equipping states, communities, educators and families with resources and flexibilities that empower students of all ages to continue pursuing their education goals. This includes the ongoing development of guidance and policies related to elementary and secondary education, special education, higher education, and other essential components of lifelong learning. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also continues to provide updated guidance for school settings.

[www.ed.gov/coronavirus](http://www.ed.gov/coronavirus)

### **2. How can we get better, dependable, affordable internet to underserved communities?**

As schools consider restarting in the fall under the COVID-19 pandemic precautions, teachers and students will rely on some forms of online resources to teach and to learn. Children without reliable internet access will be at a notable disadvantage during this time. Fortunately, internet service providers are finding a way to fill the gap to help kids across the United States receive remote education.

[www.simplemost.com/companies-offering-free-internet-students/](http://www.simplemost.com/companies-offering-free-internet-students/)

[www.highspeedinternet.com/resources/are-there-government-programs-to-help-me-get-internet-service](http://www.highspeedinternet.com/resources/are-there-government-programs-to-help-me-get-internet-service)

### **3. How do we value humanity?**

Oftentimes, the way we treat one another is conditioned by a number of factors: values, behavioral practices, legal structures, etc. To truly embrace diversity and humanity, it is imperative that we identify the ways in which people are treated differently and work to eliminate policies, practices, and laws that value some people over other people. We must work to advance social justice, ensuring that everyone is treated with respect, love, and equity.

### **4. Dr. Pierce, I love that you mentioned that schools need to interrogate history. Could you expand a bit about that, since normally parents do not have a role in shaping curriculum?**

Parent engagement is key. When parents and teachers work together to establish a thriving classroom, students' grades, attendance, self-esteem, and graduation rates increase. Parents can reinforce learning at home by taking their children on visits to museums, parks, or theaters to connect with lessons. Parents can continue academic learning at home, including helping with homework, goal setting, and other curriculum-related activities. Parents should be aware of what their children are learning and what their children are expected to learn throughout the year. Parents should reach out to their children's teachers if they notice gaps in the curriculum, for example the exclusion of the history of Native Americans, African-American, etc. Parents can also be involved with decision making through school councils or improvement teams, committees, and other organizations.

[www.nea.org/assets/docs/PB11\\_ParentInvolvement08.pdf](http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/PB11_ParentInvolvement08.pdf)

5. Have parent teacher conferences normally included an understanding of home life and culture? Or are you thinking that this needs to be addressed as parents are guiding education from the home due to the pandemic? This did not happen when I went to parent conferences but perhaps it was considered too personal.

Every parent teacher conference is unique. For example, my husband and I always partner with our children's teachers to ensure they understand our home life and culture. We share how important education is and our expectations. We share specific information about our children's background to ensure teachers know all the elements that make up their lived experience - our children are African American and Native American, our children come from a working class family that attends church regularly, etc. I strongly encourage all parents to partner with teachers in this way - pandemic or not. You can start with a simple letter/email, introducing your child and family to the teacher.

[www.edutopia.org/article/5-strategies-successful-parent-teacher-conference](http://www.edutopia.org/article/5-strategies-successful-parent-teacher-conference)

[www.nea.org/home/60103.htm](http://www.nea.org/home/60103.htm)

**6. Bicultural students are extremely smart, they know two cultures, two languages. How can teachers celebrate their knowledge? God makes beauty in differences. The future can be so rich.**

Change has to start with educators before it can realistically begin to take place with students. Educators' cultural competence -- their ability to form authentic and effective relationships across differences is key, critically important. Culturally Responsive Education emphasizes the use of a curriculum that honors each student's culture and life experience. It aims to teach students to respect and appreciate their own culture and heritage. Minority students can sometimes feel pressured to dispose of their cultural norms, behaviors, and traditions in order to fit in with the prevalent social order. Consistent exposure to positive role models is another excellent way to emphasize respect and admiration for a student's own culture. All too often, students are exposed to ethnic stereotypes on television and in movies. Providing students with role models who demonstrate exceptional leadership qualities and make social contributions in a non-stereotypical way helps students recognize the limitless ways in which they can have a positive impact on society. It's important to avoid teaching students about the same minority role models repeatedly. For example, students often only learn about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks, but not about W.E.B. Du Bois, Booker T. Washington, Madame C.J. Walker, Ronald McNair, etc. Encourage balance when highlighting role models.

[iteslj.org/Articles/Pratt-Johnson-CrossCultural.html](http://iteslj.org/Articles/Pratt-Johnson-CrossCultural.html)



## GWPN Forum: Crisis in Education

July 16, 2020 · Kiyomi Schmidt, Outreach Director

To empower women and families during this time of crisis and racial unrest, Global Women's Peace Network (GWPN) USA initiated a three-part Facebook live speaker series, under the theme Reflect, Reset, Rebuild. After a very successful first session on "Life and Business" at the end of May (read [report](#)), the second forum was held on July 1st on the topic "Crisis in Education." Two expert women leaders shared on the global academic crisis and current uncertainty around COVID-19, followed by the opportunities it presents to chart new paths toward peace.

Our first speaker was **Dr. Susan Taffer**, a global educator, humanitarian and founder of World Connections Foundation in Arizona, who also serves as director of the Western Regional GWPN. She began her talk, entitled "**Crisis in Education, A Global Perspective: The Problems, Purpose, and Potential,**" by reflecting on the current pandemic and resetting our sights and priorities moving forward.

She shared that during times of major economic crisis, the consequences disproportionately fall on women and minority groups. But this time also offers us opportunity for the systemic recovery from the social inequities that exist. While education creates open opportunity for all, it is often the first budget to be cut. She encourages us to step up as one world, to share the outcome, and be part of the solution.

**Dr. Tina D. Pierce**, a professional development program manager at the Ohio State University and founder of education consulting company WORTH, continued the conversation, acknowledging this current time of disruption that holds opportunity for great change. In her presentation, "**Crisis in Education: An Opportunity for Partnerships with Parents,**" she argued that not only will this time change how people are educated, but the content of what will be taught, and how parents will be involved in the learning process.

Global Women's Peace Network USA Presents

Reflect. Reset. Rebuild. "Crisis In Education"

**Speaker: Dr. Susan Taffer**  
Global Educator, Humanitarian, and Principal  
Founder of World Connections Foundation

**Moderator: Angelika Selle**  
President WFWP USA,  
Vice President WFWP Intl. (North America)

**Speaker: Dr. Tina D. Pierce**  
Experienced Educator, Interdisciplinary  
Scholar, and Founder of WORTH

"Crisis in Education, A Global Perspective:  
The Problems, Purpose, and Potential"

"Crisis in Education: An Opportunity  
for Partnerships with Parents"



Dr. Pierce emphasized that parents hold the key to instilling values and morals, understanding their child's challenges and behaviors, and setting boundaries in terms of the sudden increase in technology use. The need for open communication lines between families and schools is apparent, to rebuild a society where humans care about the humanity of others, and are equipped to make the world a better place.

She also provided the following list of **resources on school and family partnerships**:

- Home-to-School Connections: Resource Roundup by Shira Loewenstein (2015)
- Sharing Data to Create Stronger Parent Partnerships by Edutopia Staff (2015)
- The Beginners' Guide to Connecting Home and School by Tabitha Dell'Angelo and Joanna Maulbeck (2014)
- 8 Tips for Reaching Out to Parents by David Cutler (2014)

- Five-Minute Film Festival: Parent-Teacher Partnerships by Amy Erin Borovoy (2013)

After an engaging question and answer session, moderator of the show, WFWP USA President Angelika Selle, concluded the forum by highlighting highlighting the Mother of Peace as a mentor, educator, and leader who has given her life to bring about peace globally, alongside her timely memoir.

Thank you to all who contributed to this insightful discussion with comments on how this forum positively impacted you! In case you missed it, you can watch the recording by clicking below.

[Watch Video](#)

### Comments from participants:

**Steven Matthew Goldberg:** *This is the best presentation I've seen this far to help us orient our thinking in the current situation. As an educator I often am called upon to work in outdoor settings with families and school groups. Your speakers today provided resources and ideas that I can use to connect family, school and church communities in the education matrix of educational tour guiding. Thank you so very much!*

**Marguerite Felig:** *Dr. Taffer and Dr. Pierce gave brief, succinct and hard hitting personal insights about education. During the momentous changes that education everywhere in the world is suddenly experiencing, personal values and family values are more essential than they have been. Teachers (I am a teacher) weren't trained to teach the way they are! Teaching in partnership with families is the New Norm in education everywhere. Thank you for sharing these profound and valuable strategies and insights, Mrs. Selle, Dr. Taffer and Dr. Pierce!*

**Editor's Note:** Dr. Pierce sent in written responses to audience questions that were not covered during the live session due to time constraints. You