

# Educational Pathways



## Racial & Educational Justice Department

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# Acknowledgment

"As much as we attempt to ignore it, look around it, over and under it, race remains a constant reality in our schools and classrooms." - Dr. Tyrone C. Howard

Ember Robertson, Alexis Meikle and Rachel Helmersen worked with Ranna Harb and Ayva Thomas from the Northshore School District Racial and Educational Justice Department to create this zine. Some of us have not experienced racism personally and we would like to acknowledge that we do not speak for the Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) community. We want to lift the BIPOC voices and make sure they are heard. We also want to give credit where it's due and thank the BIPOC community for helping us educate ourselves in racial and educational justice. We continue to learn how to be actively anti-racist and be active allies in the community. Any mistakes or misconceptions are our own. We commit ourselves to growing and learning more about the complexities of the topics highlighted.

The goal of this zine is to give resources to learn how to be actively anti-racist. To also amplify the work of the Northshore School District Racial and Educational Justice Department and to amplify the BIPOC community voices. The Racial and Educational Justice departments say on their website that they are "committed to creating a safe, caring, and mutually respectful environment within our school district community so that all students, families and staff feel welcomed, valued and supported. We recognize and advocate for the racial, ethnic, cultural, disability/ability, economic and religious diversity in our district."

The Northshore School District acknowledges that they are on Coast Salish Lands which has been colonized and renamed to Bothell, Kenmore, Redmond and Woodinville. In the Northshore School District's words, "We acknowledge the experiences of genocide, forced relocation, ethnic cleansing, and land theft of Indigenous peoples and sacred lands so we can build our awareness of how settler colonization still exists today. We honor the ways of knowing and ways of being of Indigenous peoples and tribal nations, who are still here and thriving, in our district-community. We resolve to learn from these realities and partner with local Indigenous peoples and tribal leaders to work toward a justice-driven educational experience for each student, family, community member, and educator in Northshore. We also acknowledge that this is a working land acknowledgement that will continue to evolve as our partnership with local Indigenous peoples and tribal leaders expands." Ember, Alexis and Rachel included the poetry and native land map to help further amplify BIPOC voices in this zine.

# Glossary

**BIPOC** - An acronym for people identifying as black, indigenous, and/or a person of color.

**White privilege** - This phrase is used to describe the privileges awarded to individuals only because of their white identities. White privilege is not something that can easily be defined, and it will likely look different from person to person. This is not to say a non-white person does not or can not have privilege, or that white people have not experienced being underprivileged in certain areas.

**School-to-Prison Pipeline** - The system which maintains the mass incarceration of young black men and people of color. This system begins with school policies that deny students a right to education, funneling young people into the judicial system, and eventually into prison.

**Mass Incarceration** - Used to describe the U.S' issue of having one of the highest rates of incarceration in the world due to systemic racism.

**Equity** - The process of identifying an individual's or community's needs based on who they are, where they are, their potential barriers, and their history, and taking actions which aim to achieve social justice and wellbeing for everyone.

**Anti-Racism** - Is working against racism and its many forms through actions that promote racial justice, equity, and equality.

**Allyship** - Any person that actively promotes and aspires to advance the culture of inclusion through intentional, positive and conscious efforts that benefit people as a whole.

# **Northshore School District**

## **Racial & Educational Justice Department**

# **Mission & Values**

The Northshore School District's Racial and Educational Justice Department is committed to supporting and sustaining an educational community that is inclusive, diverse and equitable.

The values of diversity, inclusion and equity are inextricably linked to our mission of excellence, and we embrace these values as being critical to development, learning, and success. To fully realize our mission it is imperative we recognize the institutional barriers, including racism and bias, that contribute to the pervasive, disparate educational outcomes within our school system. We will take action to eliminate barriers as we strive for educational equity for all student groups. We expect nothing less than an accessible, multicultural community in which civility and respect are fostered, and discrimination and harassment are not tolerated. We recognize that our work to respect diversity and to include all in our community has roots in a history that has privileged certain groups while excluding and oppressing others. In our work with our schools and community, we work to address the detrimental effects of this history through our teaching, practice, training and service.

Moreover, we are vigilant to advance the voices and needs of our marginalized populations, given the existing power differentials within our community and in the larger society.

# Why did the Equity and Diversity Department change its name to Racial and Educational Justice Department?

Formerly called the Equity & Diversity Department, the Racial and Educational Justice Department emphasizes the importance of keeping justice-driven education at the forefront of everything we do. Rebranding the Department's name and mission is another way for our Northshore community to understand the District's commitment to this work. Northshore School District continually values culturally responsive practices, equitable learning for all students, and collaboration with our school-community members.

The Equity and Diversity Department changed its name to the Racial and Educational Justice Department in September 2020. Education is still a primary focus in the Racial and Educational Justice Department. The Department also knows that students who are marginalized continue to face racial and educational injustices, and wants each student to know that they are seen and heard. Rebranding the Department's name and mission is also another way to cultivate spaces of racial belonging and inclusivity. Seeing and knowing what is happening in society today, it is so important to lift the voices of the unheard and to focus on initiatives that specifically address systemic and institutional injustices that have impacted our students, families and staff for far too long. Both concepts of racial and educational justice highlight the Department's mission to explicitly address and challenge institutional structures of oppression that have founded education.

# Allyship & Positionality

## What is an ally?

An ally is any person that actively promotes and aspires to advance the culture of inclusion through intentional, positive and conscious efforts that benefit people as a whole.

Everyone has the ability to be an ally.

## What is allyship?

- a lifelong process of building relationships based on trust, consistency, and accountability with marginalized individuals and/or groups of people.
- not self-defined—work and efforts must be recognized by those you are seeking to ally with.
- an opportunity to grow and learn about ourselves, whilst building confidence in others

## To be an ally is to:

- lift others up by advocating
- share growth opportunities with others
- not view venting as a personal attack
- recognize systematic inequalities and rationalize impact of micro - aggressions
- believe underrepresented people's experiences, and most importantly - listen, support, self reflect and change.

## What is positionality?

"Positionality is the notion that personal values, views, and location in time and space influence how one understands the world. In this context, gender, race, class, and other aspects of identities are indicators of social and spatial positions and are not fixed, given qualities. Positions act on the knowledge a person has about things, both material and abstract. Consequently, knowledge is the product of a specific position that reflects particular places and spaces." -Luis Sánchez (author of the *Encyclopedia of Geography*)

# School Equity & Student-Led Equity Work

## Ashley Lovern's 6th Grade Class at Timbercrest Middle School

Last month was Hispanic and Latinx Heritage Month and the students in Ashley Lovern's sixth grade class at Timbercrest Middle School had the opportunity to celebrate with a read-in.

This heritage month is nationally observed from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15 each year to celebrate the histories, cultures, and contributions of Hispanic and Latinx peoples from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, Central America and South America.

Lovern went to the local library and pulled as many books as she could that were written by Latinx and Hispanic authors and included Latinx and Hispanic protagonists. She went back to her classroom, organized the books by category, and put them in bins. Students received brochures with questions inside to answer about their individually selected texts, and had conversations about what they learned with their classmates – both in small and large group discussions.

One student shared, "I read some poetry that is by Spanish authors and it's bilingual. It's actually really interesting and I've never done anything like this before."

Another student explained, "I was just reading a book about Cesar Chavez and his strikes for farmworkers' rights." His classmate added, "...[Chavez] was protesting for Mexican peoples' rights, work, and wages."

One more student reflected about the read-in and stated, "I enjoyed learning about different cultures and putting thought into them and then writing what we learned about them down onto a piece of paper."

When students were asked if they would like to do more projects like this in the future, they all responded with a resounding, "Yes!" This read-in is an example of the culturally responsive teaching that the Equity and Diversity Department is preparing Northshore teachers and leaders to effectively implement in their classrooms and schools. The students are ready for these conversations and the Department is excited to continue to see the positive impact they are making.

## Voices of Black Student Union (BSU) Student Leadership at North Creek High School

North Creek High School's Black Student Union (BSU) Board has done some excellent work in setting goals, thinking about what it means to be student leaders, and building community in their club since it started last spring.

This group of equity and justice-driven leaders understands the responsibility of being in such positions and strives to keep a welcoming environment for any student who wants to join the club.

Both the BSU secretary and treasurer came to North Creek from other states and reflected on the positive impact that the BSU has had on them. The secretary shared that joining the club helped her connect with students that shared similar experiences and reflected her racial background. The treasurer explained, "When I first came here in October, I didn't really know a lot of people. When I met (name redacted), she said, 'How about you join the BSU?'...and I said I'll join because it will kind of make me feel like I'm at home."

The BSU Board is also committed to a mission that empowers and amplifies the voices of the students in the club. The BSU president stated, "This year we have something we're striving toward and I hope we can get there soon because I want to get to a place where everyone believes in themselves and pushes themselves even further. I think we're slowly but surely getting there."

Some of the goals they have set with and for all students in the club this year are to cultivate a safe space and sense of belonging, foster positive identity development, build community, consistently post to their Instagram page as a way to educate and connect with the school community, take field trips, plan events, and bring in guest speakers. They are all in agreement that if they could fulfill their biggest dream, they would love to take all club members on a trip to Washington, D.C. to visit the National Museum of African American History and Culture. This is a group of student leaders who is driven, passionate, deliberate, and already making a difference in and beyond their club. They are a great reminder that our students are already embodying what it means to be an agent for change.



# Monthly Themes

The Racial and Educational Justice Department has developed a four-year plan to roll out equity-based initiatives in the district. As a part of this plan, they have held monthly educational and racial justice sessions with different themes for each month. These sessions often involve norms, guiding questions, Ted Talks, reflections, break-out groups, and current versus reimagined Northshore communities.

October

Self, Identity, and Community

November

Privilege and Power Structures

December

Boundaries, Margins, and Bridges

January

Self-care and Self-Love

February

Multicultural Histories of Resistance

March

Liberation Movements

April

Youth Agency and Activism

May

Anti-racist Collaborations in Education

# COVID-19 Impacts on BIPOC Communities

For the last year and a half, COVID-19 has challenged humanity in ways which we are still trying to fully understand. While we have come a long way since the beginning, the pandemic is not over and its impacts on our communities have illuminated and exacerbated many of our societies' existing inequities.

Although everyone has experienced at least some of the negative impacts of COVID-19, racial and ethnic minority groups have undoubtedly been impacted the most. Often working in high exposure environments as essential workers has put a disproportionate amount of BIPOC people at a much greater risk. Minority communities also face a plethora of systemic challenges ranging from language barriers to discrimination when trying to receive healthcare. The recent and ongoing crisis in India is a more extreme example of the consequences which these health inequities can have on a nation.

Despite the many challenges that COVID-19 has thrown our way, BIPOC communities are continually combatting hatred and inequity, whether it be protesting after the murder of George Floyd, speaking out against the racist attacks on our Asian communities, or promoting solidarity while advocating for Palestinian freedom.

With so much going on in the world right now, just getting through day-to-day tasks can seem overwhelming and exhausting. As our communities continue to work together towards social justice, we also need to take time for ourselves, give ourselves grace, and continue learning and growing through self-care.

***“Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.” -Audre Lorde (Black activist and poet)***

# Global Connections



"Global connections are always important to make through racial and educational justice work.

Today, I want to name that Asian Indians, Palestinians, and Colombians are all experiencing multiple forms of violence due to many un-natural, yet oppressively strategic, causes.

To name a few, the violence that these communities are, and have been, facing are due to ongoing settler colonialism and state violence. Also functioning is oppressive state power that impacts access to resources for health, safety, and survival for these communities.

These are global human rights issues."

# Recommended Reading #1

“Note to Educators: Hope Required When Growing Roses in Concrete” By Jeffrey M.R. Duncan-Andrade

This reading talks about hope, especially in the context of education, Obamas’ campaign and how important it is for nurturing youth of color. The author identifies three forms of false hope which urban schools are known to peddle and explains that outside of these three false hopes, there is critical hope, which has practices that produce true hope.

## Hokey Hope

What Martin Luther King Jr. referred to as “the tranquilizing drug of gradualism”. It is the notion that if you work hard and play by the rules, you will live out the “American Dream”.

## Mythical Hope

The insinuation that the time of racial injustice has come to an end;  
The false narrative of equal opportunity

## Hope Deferred

Educators acknowledge victims to injustice and blame “the system” but do not go any further to transform these issues or act.

In the past 30 years, hope has been attacked through disinvestment in schools and overinvestment in the prison industrial complex. Outside of these three false hopes, there is critical hope, which has practices that produce true hope .

# Recommended Reading Continued

“Note to Educators: Hope Required When Growing Roses in Concrete” By Jeffrey M.R. Duncan-Andrade

**Critical hope:** Material, Socratic, and audacious.

Tupac referred to young people who emerge out of socially toxic environments as “roses that grow from concrete.”

## Material

involves educators who know that although concrete is an environment that makes it almost impossible for flowers to grow, there are always cracks in the concrete. The quality of teaching, along with the resources and networks educators connect students to, are those cracks.

## Socratic

The courage to pursue the painful path of bursting through those jagged cracks in the concrete. This requires both teachers and students to painfully examine their lives and actions within an unjust society and share the sensibility that that pain may pave the path to justice.

## Audacious

The solidarity to share in others’ suffering, to sacrifice self so that other roses may bloom and to collectively struggle to replace the concrete completely with a rose garden.

Unlike the three types of false hope that are separate, these three elements come together to produce critical hope. The author points out that we must purposefully nurture students, colleagues, and ourselves through the cracks, knowing we will sustain the trauma of damaged petals along the way.

# Recommended Reading #2

“Dismantling the School to Prison Pipeline ”

NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, INC

Mass incarceration is a leading issue in the US with people of color being among the majority of incarcerated individuals. This article focuses on how mass incarceration begins with our flawed school systems, how our society is negatively impacted, and some solutions.

Policies which criminalize certain behavior through partnerships with law enforcement, juvenile detention facilities, and the court system have created bases for punishment which often results in youth being denied an education. These policies are based largely off of fear and not reality. For example, the article points out that many people believe school violence to be a rising issue, but it is actually a declining issue.

This fear also points to the racial aspect of the school to prison pipeline which is an other main point of the article. Negative stereotypes of African American males have no doubt fueled the school to prison pipeline (as it has mass incarceration). To quote some statistics from the article,

“For example, in 2000, African Americans represented only 17% of public school enrollment nationwide, but accounted for 34% of suspensions. Likewise, in 2003, African-American youths made up 16% of the nation’s overall juvenile population but accounted for 45% of juvenile arrests. Studies show that African-American students are far more likely than their white peers to be suspended, expelled, or arrested for the same kind of conduct at school.”

This adds to the racist stereotype that black men and boys are predatory and dangerous. It begins with the neglected and under-resourced public education systems. This results in poor educational achievement and poor behavioral outcomes.

# Recommended Reading Continued

## “Dismantling the School to Prison Pipeline ”

NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, INC

The article says, “The inadequacies of the public educational system, especially in areas of concentrated poverty, have set students up to fail, as continuing resource deficiencies - evidenced by a lack of experienced or certified teachers and guidance counselors, advanced instruction, early intervention programs, extracurricular activities and safe, well equipped facilities - lock many students into second class educational environments that neglect their needs and make them feel disengaged from their schools.” Many of the problems which lead to students being removed from school also reflect a lack of resources. Guidance counseling, after school programs, and proper resources for students with additional educational needs are often not met which manifests as poor behavior or poor test grades. Harsh discipline policies provide schools with a convenient method to remove certain students and mask educational deficiencies. The overuse of suspensions, expulsions and arrests is a reflection of the lack of resources. This “easy” way out is also the most expensive. There is also the issue of the achievement gap. Black students are more likely to be held back based on their test results. This ignores the problems of the current educational system and feeds the school to prison pipeline.

The cost of these resources is a lot but so is the current system. The article argues that if we prioritize these resources there will be a much more positive outcome in the future. We need to take a look at the current disciplinary policies and the impact of those policies. The school environment needs to be safe without harsh discipline policies. Students who cease to have access to education and become more at risk of incarceration as adults could have instead used their individual talents to better their communities. While these resources do cost money, detention facilities and law enforcement also costs a great deal of money. The difference is that current methods do not have positive impacts. There needs to be a real community investment in the school system to give all students the educational opportunities they need in order to succeed.

### Discussion Questions

1. What were the disciplinary policies at your schools? How do they differ from peers' experiences with disciplinary policies at their schools?
2. What steps can we take as individuals and as a society to make sure that everyone has access to a quality education?
3. A lot of the school policies outlined in the article treat education in the US as a privilege rather than a human right. What are some alternative ways we can think of education and how would these ways of thinking dismantle the school to prison pipeline?
4. Reflecting on your time as a young student, what are the key differences between negative and positive experiences you may have had? What were the outcomes?

# Poetry

We included poetry from BIPOC artists to amplify their voices and highlight the way they share their experiences through language and word-art.

## Rootless

BY Jenny Xie

Between Hanoi and Sapa there are clean slabs of rice fields  
and no two brick houses in a row.  
I mean, no *three*—  
See, counting's hard in half-sleep, and the rain pulls a sheet  
over the sugar palms and their untroubled leaves.  
Hours ago, I crossed a motorbike with a hog strapped to its seat,  
the size of a date pit from a distance.  
Can this solitude be rootless, unhooked from the ground?  
No matter. The mind resides both inside and out.  
It can think itself and think itself into existence.  
I sponge off the eyes, no worse for wear.  
My frugal mouth spends the only foreign words it owns.  
At present, on this sleeper train, there's nowhere to arrive.  
Me? I'm just here in my traveler's clothes, trying on each passing  
town for size.

## Enough for Me

BY Fadwa Tuqan

Enough for me to lie in the earth,  
to be buried in her,  
to sink meltingly into her fecund soil, to vanish ...  
only to spring forth like a flower  
brightening the play of my countrymen's children.  
Enough for me to remain  
in my native soil's embrace,  
to be as close as a handful of dirt,  
a sprig of grass,  
a wildflower.

## Rosa

BY RITA DOVE

How she sat there,  
the time right inside a place  
so wrong it was ready.

That trim name with  
its dream of a bench  
to rest on. Her sensible coat.

Doing nothing was the doing:  
the clean flame of her gaze  
carved by a camera flash.

How she stood up  
when they bent down to retrieve  
her purse. That courtesy.

## Harlem

BY LANGSTON HUGHES

What happens to a dream deferred?  
Does it dry up  
like a raisin in the sun?  
Or fester like a sore—  
And then run?  
Does it stink like rotten meat?  
Or crust and sugar over—  
like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags  
like a heavy load.

*Or does it explode?*

## Anasazi

BY TACEY M. ATSITTY

How can we die when we're already  
prone to leaving the table mid-meal  
like Ancient Ones gone to breathe  
elsewhere. Salt sits still, but pepper's gone  
rolled off in a rush. We've practiced dying  
for a long time: when we skip dance or town,  
when we chew. We've rounded out  
like dining room walls in a canyon, eaten  
through by wind—Sorry we rushed off;  
the food wasn't ours. Sorry the grease sits  
white on our plates, and the jam that didn't set—  
use it as syrup to cover every theory of us.



# Native Land Map

We have been given this website as a resource both by our professor, Dr. C, as well as the Racial and Educational Justice Department. We list below the mission and information from the resource as well as a picture of the webpage to demonstrate how many Native lands we are on in North America alone.

## Our Mission

We strive to map Indigenous lands in a way that changes, challenges, and improves the way people see the history of their countries and peoples. We hope to strengthen the spiritual bonds that people have with the land, its people, and its meaning.

We strive to map Indigenous territories, treaties, and languages across the world in a way that goes beyond colonial ways of thinking in order to better represent how Indigenous people want to see themselves.

We provide educational resources to correct the way that people speak about colonialism and indigeneity, and to encourage territory awareness in everyday speech and action.

## Who We Are

Native-Land.ca is a website run by the nonprofit organization Native Land Digital. We are guided by a Board of Directors and an Advisory Council. Our funding comes from friendly organizations and individual donors.



# Resources

## Adult resources to read

1. [So You Want to Talk About Race?](#) by Ijeoma Oluo
2. [White Fragility](#) by Robin DiAngelo
3. [White Awake](#) by Daniel Hill
4. [The Body is Not an Apology](#) by Sonya Renee Taylor
5. [The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness](#) by Michelle Alexander
6. [Waking Up White](#) by Debby Irving
7. [Raising White Kids](#) by Jennifer Harvey
8. [How to be Anti-Racist](#) by Ibram Kendi
9. [The Color of Law](#) by Richard Rothstein
10. [White Rage](#) by Carol Anderson

## Websites with large lists of diverse books

1. [Happily Ever Elephants](#)
2. [Here Wee Read](#)
3. Social Justice Books <https://socialjusticebooks.org/booklists/>

## Children's books to read with your students

1. [Something Happened in Our Town](#) by Marietta Collins PhD
2. [Race Cars: A Children's Book About White Privilege](#) by Jenny Devenny
3. [I Am Enough](#) by Grace Beyers
4. [Not My Idea: A Book About Whiteness \(Ordinary Terrible Things\)](#) by Anastasia Higginbotham
5. [Separate is Never Equal](#) by Duncan Tonatiuh
6. [Skin Like Me](#) by LaTashia M. Perry
7. [Not Quite Snow White](#) by Ashley Franklin
8. [Parker Looks Up](#) by Parker & Jessica Curry
9. [Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut](#) by Derrick Barnes
10. [All Are Welcome](#) by Alexandra Penfold
11. [Same, Same But Different](#) by Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw

# Resources

Resources for talking to kids about race and difficult subjects

**Are your kids too young to talk about race?**

Nope. Silence about race can reinforce racism by letting children draw their own conclusions.

<b>0-1 year</b> At birth, babies look equally at faces of all races. At 3 months, babies look more at faces that match the race of their caregivers. <small>Kelley et al., 2009</small>	<b>2 years</b> Children as young as 2 use race to reason about people's behaviors. <small>Hirschfeld, 2008</small>	<b>2.5 years</b> By 30 months, most children use race to choose playmates. <small>Katz &amp; Kohlin, 1997</small>	<b>4-5 years</b> Expressions of racial prejudice often peak at ages 4 and 5. <small>Abram, 2008</small>
<b>5 years</b> Black and latinx children in research settings show no preference toward their own groups, as compared to white children at this age, who are more likely to be strongly biased in favor of whiteness. <small>Dashon et al., 2008</small>	<b>5 years</b> By kindergarten, children show many of the same racial attitudes held by adults in our culture. They have already learned to associate some groups with higher status than others. <small>Kinzler, 2006</small>	<b>5-7 years</b> Explicit conversations with 5-7 year olds about interracial friendship can dramatically improve their racial attitudes in as little as a single week. <small>Bronson &amp; Merryman, 2009</small>	Adapted from work by the Children's Community School.  More info at <a href="http://childrenscommunityschool.org/social-justice-resources/">childrenscommunityschool.org/social-justice-resources/</a>

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