

RSD17 Diversity Work: Update

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Board of Education Curriculum Subcommittee 2/8/21


A District with Equity at its Core

In order to have a coherent action plan addressing issues and opportunities related to diversity, our district would benefit from a **shared definition of Equity** as part of our core mission in order to build an “equity consciousness” and to address equity opportunities for improvement.




District Equity Statement

Therefore, a key action step at this time is to propose an **Equity Statement** for consideration by the Board of Education. Such a statement could be included as part of the district's non-discrimination statement (on the website and other important publications). It would also be checked for **alignment to the district mission statement as well as the Vision of the Graduate (VOG)**.



Example of an Equity Statement

All students and staff receive what they each need within an environment and system that is intentionally built for them to achieve academic and social and emotional success regardless of race, ethnicity, language or other characteristics of their identity.



Equity as a District Policy

Another key action step is to review the district's Non-Discrimination Policy to see if it encompasses the tenets of Equity and if it does not, recommend that the Policy Subcommittee consider developing an Equity Policy (or improve upon the current policies in place for explicit connection to equity).



Goals and Actions to Ensure Equity for All Students

The following goals and actions represent our initial (Phase 1) plans to address Equity in the RSD17 schools. The **overarching goal is to continuously improve upon culturally responsive practice to support equitable access and outcomes for all students.**

- **Provide every student with equitable access** to high-quality and culturally relevant curriculum, instruction, and support.
 - Continue an “Equity Opportunity Review” of our Language Arts, Social Studies, and SEL curricula.
 - Continue to select impactful instructional materials which provide the opportunity to expand or enhance students’ cultural awareness.
- Ensure **pathways to college and career-ready success for all students** and actively encourage, support, and **expect high academic achievement and social-emotional wellness** for all students.

Goals and Actions to Ensure Equity for All Students cont.

- Support staff in improving upon culturally responsive school and instructional practices.
 - Provide **professional development** through partnerships with organizations/persons who have demonstrated culturally-specific expertise to build cultural competency; help staff members identify potential implicit bias, understand the impact of culture on their own identity and the ways in which it shapes their professional practice.
- **Engage the voices and lived experiences of students** (including HK Alumni) **and families**, including persons of color, to better understand and address equity opportunities.

Professional Partnerships

We are currently exploring the investment of professional partnerships to provide expert technical assistance so that we follow a coherent strategic plan to meet our equity goals.



Updates from the District Diversity Committee



Diversity Committee Mission Statement

The Diversity Committee is dedicated to intentionally cultivating equity by educating our students, staff and stakeholders to consider multiple perspectives and value different backgrounds and histories in order to engage and thrive in an increasingly dynamic and diverse world.



Professional Development Update

The Diversity Committee recently completed a 4 part professional development series with instructors from the University of Connecticut.

The series focused on self-reflection and understanding social identity in order to expand cultural competence, reflecting on how that impacts our society and classrooms, and aligning Equity goals with learning outcomes.

Next Steps: Our professional development subcommittee will design PD sessions aimed at engaging teachers in identity work which will set the stage for understanding the purpose and goals of teaching with Equity at the core. These sessions will be infused into staff meetings beginning this year, continuing into next year.

Curriculum and Instruction Updates

Discussion Guides to support the assured experiences of using diverse/multicultural texts were developed and put into use this year.

- Texts are being read aloud in K-8 Language Arts and Social Studies classrooms, followed by whole class discussions around the themes in the texts.

A placeholder for additional texts are included in the 2021-22 budget proposal to expand titles aimed at providing opportunities for students to develop an appreciation for multiple perspectives and first person accounts.

[Diverse Texts Master List](#)

Pacing & Discussion Guides

RSD17 Diverse Literature Plan Grade K



Read Aloud Texts

Month	Title	Description
September	Alma and How She Got Her Name by Juana Martinez Neal	This debut book won the Caldecott Honor. Alma Sofia Esperanza Jose Pura Candela thinks her name is too long, until her father tells her about all the people she is named after. Alma realizes that each name has its own special story.
November	The Color of Us by Karen Katz	Lena takes a walk through her neighborhood to notice all the different, beautiful, and delicious colors of her friends' skin.
January	Same. Same But Different by Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw	Elliot lives in the United States and Kailash lives in India. They are pen pals. Through their letters, they learn that their worlds look different but are actually similar.
March	Whoever You Are by Mem Fox	Children learn that although people around the world look and sound different, we are all the same in the ways that are most important.



RSD17 Diverse Texts Read Aloud Discussion Planner Kindergarten: Alma and How She Got Her Name

This discussion planner is intended to guide the conversation as you teach the topics and themes covered in this text. A book introduction to lead your lesson is included, as well as a few questions that you may choose from as you read through the text. Please choose the questions that best align with your conversation based on the students in your classroom. It is important that the topics of social justice and equity are addressed in a developmentally appropriate way and that students are comfortable discussing the content, topics and themes in the texts. Please plan to read through the text and plan ahead in order to be prepared for a rich discussion.

Title: Alma and How She Got Her Name

Author: Juana Martinez-Neal

Summary of text: This debut book won the Caldecott Honor. Alma Sofia Esperanza Jose Pura Candela thinks her name is too long, until her father tells her about all the people she is named after. Alma realizes that each name has its own special story.

Text Type: Fiction

Before Reading

Vocabulary to pre teach:

- NA

Brief book introduction: This book is about a character named Alma Sofia Esperanza Jose Pura Candela. She thinks her name is too long! She complains to her father that her name is too long! It never fits on a page. Then her father tells her about all the people she is named after. Let's read to find out why Alma's name is long but special.

During Reading

Vocabulary to embed in discussion:

- Plazas
- Ancestors
- Escucha (hear, listen), piensa (think), denuncia (complaint)

Prompts to embed in your instruction:

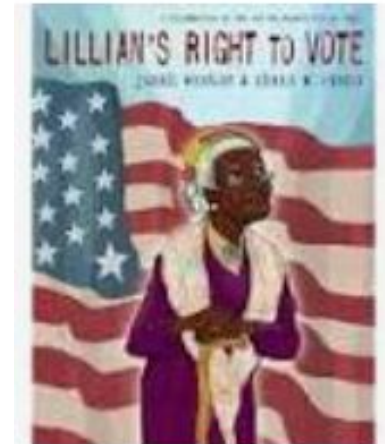
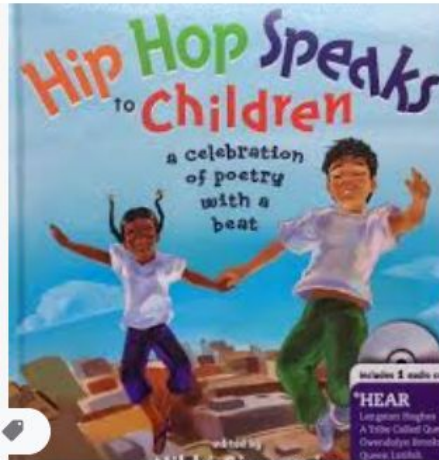
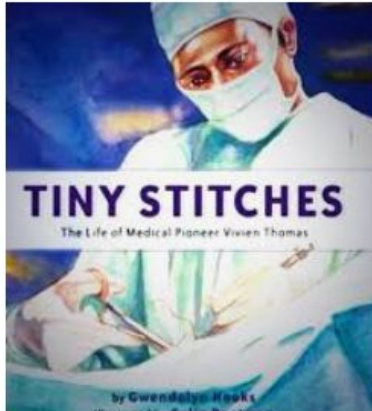
How does Alma seem to feel about the name Sofia? How do you know?

How is Alma like her grandfather, Jose?

How does Alma stand up for what is right the way her grandmother, Candela, did?

Anecdotes from the Classroom

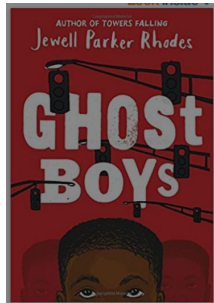
“My students have been highly engaged when I read the multicultural books. It leads to thoughtful questions and discussions that often begin with, “I had no idea that happened.” I believe the students look forward to these books as much as I do, and the discussions are highly engaging.” -*Jessica Spearrin (HKIS Grade 5 Language Arts teacher)*



Anecdotes from the Classroom

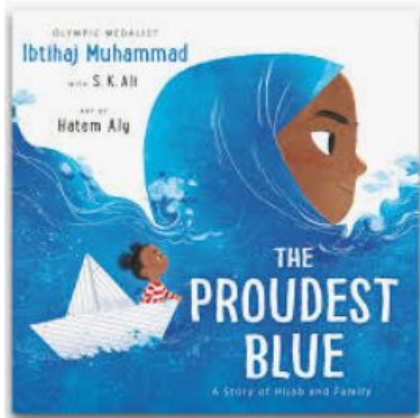
“The work is important and rich. I am grateful to be facilitating with our wonderful students who are so eager to know, to contemplate, to be agents of change, and to create a space for awareness.”- *Lynne Landry (HKMS Grades 7 & 8 Language Arts Teacher)*

“Ghost Boys was a novel that helped us open our eyes to a real world issue that is happening and should help us learn for the future.” *Grade 7 Student*



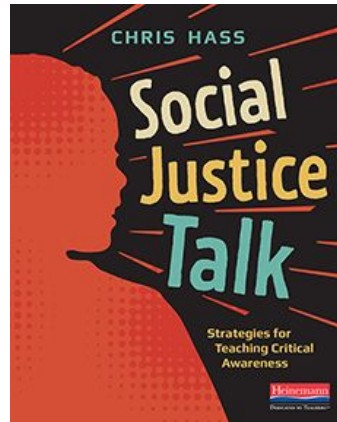
Anecdotes from the Classroom

“Reading the The Proudest Blue was eye opening for me as a teacher. Through my background research, I was able to introduce the traditions and cultures to my students accurately. These books are opening up great discussions and giving students expanded windows into the world.” *Kim Brustman (Grade 3 KES Teacher)*



Social Justice Core Resource

Social Justice Talk by Chris Haas has been ordered for teachers to assist in facilitating rich discussions related to bias and how students, schools and communities can take positive actions towards building climates where all are respected and valued.



Partnering with the Community

HKYFS, in collaboration with the RSD17 Diversity Committee, has organized a **study group** that will meet monthly in the evenings beginning in February focused on diversity, equity and inclusion.

- If interested contact Laurie Ruderfer at HKYFS.

Parent focus groups are being organized for interested parents.

- If interested contact Jenn Beermuender at jbeermuender@rsd17.org