

# Building Racial Equity in the Lake Washington School District

## Professional Learning and Training Plan 2020-2021



### Our Why

The Spring and Summer have passed, and many streets of our country look drastically different, our social media posts have likely shifted their contexts, and pumpkin flavors and scents abound for nearly every category of food, home, and self-care products. On the work side of things, we did the hard work of getting school started, we made dozens of schedule adjustments, sent out emails to our families and students, and have been in countless meetings, working in ways that many of us could have never imagined a year ago.

The deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery, along with young people, such as Tamir Rice and Trayvon Martin, mobilized the many voices of youth, staff, and communities within our district. These voices called on our district to enact change because those five aforementioned names are part of a long list of individuals whose life stories were changed and ended by their tragic deaths. These deaths amplified the need to end racism through intentional, strategic learning and action, which includes having curricula, instructional practices, and meaningful and multi-faceted dialogue that integrates topics and concepts, such as bias, stereotypes, prejudice, and racism. Along with those blights, we recognized that the work should also include a broader and deeper perspective regarding Black History and the movements that have sought to extinguish not only individual racism but systemic institutional and structural racism, as well.

As a district, we began the all-important work to dismantle individual, institutional, and structural racism through our professional learning with staff, recruiting and hiring practices, most current curricula adoptions, student and community engagement and outreach, and by continuing the work with our building/site equity teams, just to name a handful.

So, now that it is Autumn—the times when foliage drastically changes, and we start to huddle within our known circles for warmth and comfort—thereto remains a call to action for race and equity work. This unpredictable time may lull us into a false sense that now is not the right time to do this work, as if it's another add-on. We have not gotten to the point that race and equity work is so tightly intertwined that it is just what we do as an organization or as leaders and learners. Therefore, this Autumn, and throughout this year especially, we need to continue to face our fears and embrace change just as many of us welcome green leaves turning golden and burgundy. We need to lean into our discomfort similarly to how we would lean into that hike with a cool November breeze blowing across our faces. We need to invite in those under-represented or colonially marginalized communities and individuals just like we offer our darkened homes the flickering light of a fireplace or a well-placed candle.

Though we face many uncertainties and barriers as leaders, educators, and human beings, we must never forget, as Dr. King said, that it is always the right time to do the right thing. Therefore, race and equity are the right work and it is the right time. Our staff, communities, families, and even more importantly, our students are depending on us.