

# The Middlebury & Southbury Equity & Inclusion Council Update

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Region 15 Board of Education Meeting  
May 9, 2022

# This Evening's Presentation

The Middlebury & Southbury  
Equity & Inclusion Council...



- Who
- Where/How
- Why
- What

**WHO**

are the members of the  
*Middlebury & Southbury Equity &  
Inclusion Council?*

Background of the  
Middlebury & Southbury  
Equity & Inclusion  
Council



## Region 15

- MS/HS students
- Teachers
- Paraprofessionals/Assistants
- Administrators
- BOE members
- Parents of R15 students

## Community

- Clergy members
- Business people
- R15 Graduates
- Former parents of R15 students
- Selectmen
- SMART
- Educators who are community members who work in other schools districts/higher education

## WHERE & HOW

is the work of the *Middlebury & Southbury Equity & Inclusion Council* happening?





- Members of the towns of Middlebury & Southbury, and Region 15 Schools working in partnership
- Purpose is honoring diversity, fostering inclusiveness, and advancing equity and the fair and just treatment of all

- **Region 15 Schools** play an important role in this work as the communities' public education system, committed to supporting and valuing all students and families;
- **The communities of Middlebury and Southbury** play an equally important role, as towns where all residents need to experience a sense of belonging, where all are and feel respected and welcome.

## The development of an Action Plan has helped guide our work

# E&I Council & Subcommittee Meetings

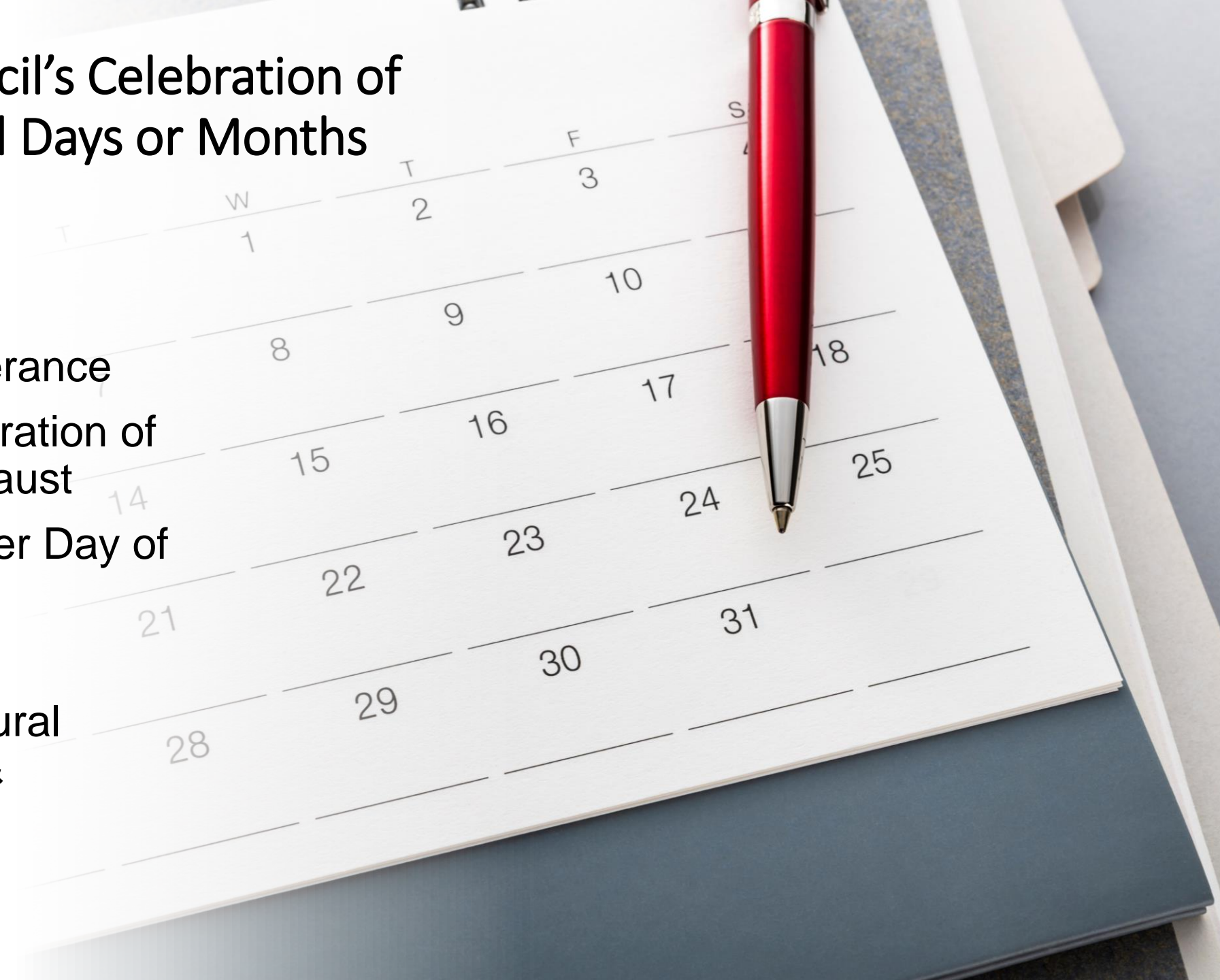


- Via zoom over the past few years including summer months
- Meeting structure for E&I Council:
  - Welcome
  - Celebration of national/international day or months
  - Updates
  - Breakout groups
    - Planning the work in our groups
    - Discussion topics
    - Book discussions
  - Upcoming meetings
- Subcommittees set up their own schedules for meetings and then report at the larger E&I Council meeting



# Examples of the Council's Celebration of National/International Days or Months

- World Teachers' Day
- International Day of Tolerance
- International Commemoration of the Victims of the Holocaust
- International Transgender Day of Visibility
- International Pink Day
- U.N. World Day for Cultural Diversity For Dialogue & Development



Why

is the *Middlebury & Southbury Equity & Inclusion Council* Necessary?

# The World is Changing...

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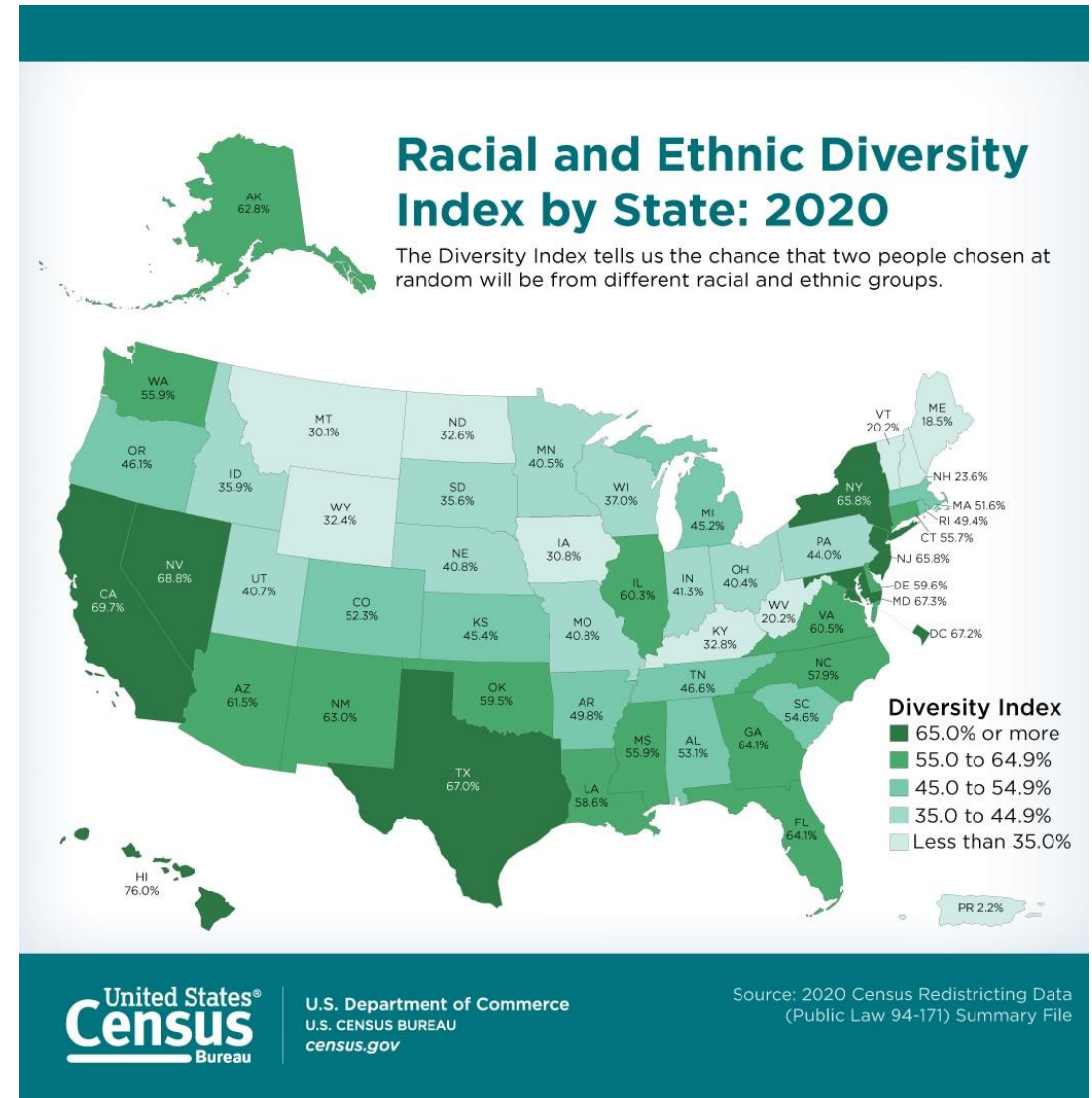
- According to the 2020 U.S Census, the United States is becoming more diverse.
- “The Chance That Two People Chosen at Random Are of Different Race or Ethnicity Groups Has Increased Since 2010”



# The Diversity Index (DI)

The Diversity Index (DI) is used to measure the probability that 2 people chosen at random will be from different races or ethnicity groups.

- The DI of the U.S. is 61.1%
  - This means that there is a 61.1% chance that 2 people chosen at random will be from different racial and ethnic groups.
- The DI of CT is 55.7%
- The DI of New Haven County is 59.5%





# R15 Demographic Makeup, October 2007-October 2021

	October 2007	October 2021
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.24%	0.11%
Asian	3.2%	4.9%
Black/African American	1.72%	2.5%
Hispanic/Latinx	2.4%	7.7%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander		0.11%
2 or More Races		3.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7.56%%</b>	<b>18.72%</b>

# R15 Demographic Makeup, October 2007-October 2021 (con't)

	October 2007	October 2021
English Language Learners	0.8%	1.3%
Free/Reduced Lunch	2%	12.2%
Special Education	13.7%	20%

# Statement from CAPSS, CUBE, ATFCT, CEA, etc.

District work with respect to diversity, equity and inclusion is also guided by the Joint Statement on the Importance of a Culturally Responsive Education (July 14, 2021) endorsed by Connecticut Association of Public Schools Superintendents (CAPSS), Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CUBE), American Federation of Teachers Connecticut (AFT CT), and the Connecticut Education Association (CEA), which means, along with the other organizations cited immediately above, CAPSS members are:

✓ “...committed to the Connecticut State Board of Education’s goal of improving the academic lives of Connecticut’s increasingly diverse student body. This includes sustaining equitable and welcoming learning environments in which all students feel valued, respected, and safe to learn and grow.” - CAPSS



# LGBTQIA+ Students

- There is a DIRECT connection between the risk/rate of suicide and self harm among LGBTQIA+ youth and the communities, schools, peers & adults that surround them.
- Inclusive safe spaces and gender affirming adults/peers can significantly reduce the risk of suicide and self harm among LGBTQIA+ children





# Some Statistics...

More than 1.8 million LGBTQIA+ youth (13-24) seriously consider suicide each year in the U.S. — and **at least one attempts suicide every 45 seconds**.

75% of LGBTQIA+ youth report that they have experienced discrimination based on their sexual orientation or gender identity at least once in their lifetime, and more than half said they experienced this discrimination in the past year.

LGBTQIA+ youth who reported having **at least one LGBTQ-affirming space had 35% reduced odds of reporting a suicide attempt in the past year** — the strongest association being with LGBTQIA+-affirming schools.

LGBTQIA+ youth who report the **presence of trusted adults in their school** have higher levels of self-esteem, and access to supportive peers is protective against anxiety and depression, including among those who lack support from their family.

LGBTQ youth who live in a community that is accepting of LGBTQ people reported significantly lower rates of attempting suicide than those who do not.

# Positive Childhood Experiences (PCE's)

- Growing attention being paid to PCE's because they **help students build a sense of belonging and connection**
  - Focusing on PCE's is aligned with a strength-based model where the **positive aspects of the students are emphasized** rather than the negative
  - PCE's predict positive outcomes including **success in school and good health** (now & in future). It also help protect students against the long-term effects of trauma
1. The ability to talk with family about feelings
  2. The feeling that family is supportive in difficult times
  3. Enjoyment & participation in community traditions
  4. Feeling of belonging in high school
  5. Feeling of being supported by friends
  6. Having at least two non-parent adults who genuinely care
  7. Feeling safe and protective by an adult at home

# R15 Theories of Action

1. If we foster schools that are welcoming and inclusive to all students, then students will feel valued and they will be better able to access their learning.
2. If we embrace communication, transparency and collaborative relationships without ourselves and the community, then we will improve trust and participation in supporting our students.
3. If we improve our ability to align assessments to curriculum, improve our data culture, and increase our analysis of student learning, then we will be more equipped to provide meaningful student engagement and increased achievement.
4. If we increase and promote access to career pathways, curriculum, and shared instructional experiences, then our district will prepare our students for the world they will enter after their time with us.



# Information From Last Year's Presentation...

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- Colleges and Universities

- Some admission essays have students write about the importance of diversity and inclusion
- Requiring training related to diversity for their leadership, faculty, staff, and students and some require students to take a certain class/classes

- Economic

- \*Companies:

- Ensuring the representation of diverse talent
- Strengthening leadership & accountability for inclusion and diversity
- Ensuring equality of opportunity through fairness and transparency
- Promote openness and tackle microaggressions
- Foster belonging through unequivocal support for multivariate diversity
  - Investing millions of dollars in training their employees in cultural competency
  - Taking actions to strengthen both inclusion and diversity

According to the McKinsey Report, “Companies in the top quartile for both gender and ethnic diversity are 12% more likely to outperform all other companies in the data set” (p. 24).



# “Top 10 Benefits of Diversity in the Workplace” - TalentLyft

Top 10 **benefits** of workplace diversity



# Emails from R15 Graduates

## Spring 2020

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am a Pomperaug High School Class of 2016 alumna.

I am extremely grateful for the education that Region 15 School has given me. However, I feel it failed to teach me and the rest of my community about racism, intersectionality, and privilege in the United States.


I am writing to you to demand the implementation of programs that promote race-awareness learning and anti-racism in our school district, including:

1. Add diversity, compassion, and anti-racism to the core curriculum of the Region 15 School district as a course or otherwise
2. Increase diversity training for and the diversity of teaching staff, administration, and disciplinary figures
3. Hold students who say or do discriminatory or offensive things accountable for their actions

Please do your part in creating a better educated, more compassionate community.

# WHAT

is the *Middlebury & Southbury Equity & Inclusion Council* and What Do They Do?



# Middlebury & Southbury Equity & Inclusion Council Action Plan

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# Middlebury & Southbury Communities..

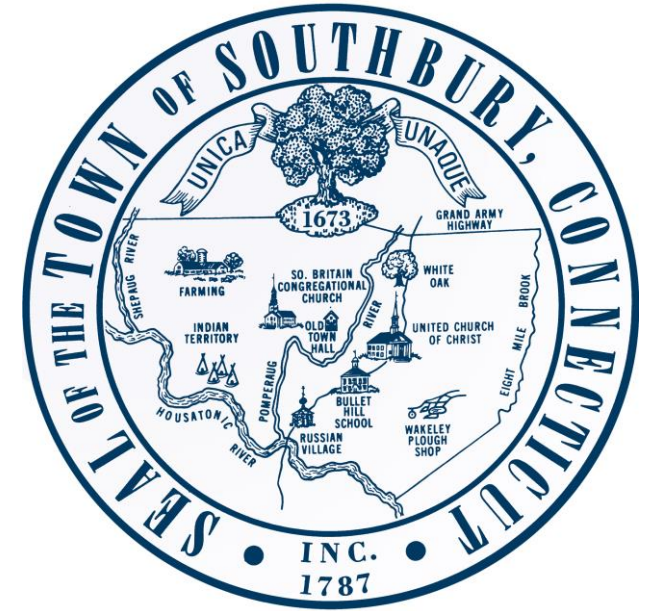
**GOAL:** *For members of the Middlebury & Southbury communities to respect and have compassion for all aspect of diversity: race, ethnicity, gender, social class, ability, religion, appearance, and sexual orientation.*

A) Commitment:

- Provide community members opportunities to participate in activities around diversity, cultural competency, equity, anti-bias education, anti racist education, and social justice

2. Commitment:

- Communicate clearly with the community



# Community Working Groups

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## **Group 1**

Organize, establish, & host panel discussion(s) and/or affinity groups

## **Group 2**

Communities of Southbury & Middlebury Intergenerational Chorus (COSMIC)

## **Group 3**

Development of a one-pager reflecting the E&I Council to share w/businesses & communities

## **Group 4**

Establish group to connect families new to MB & SB to the community & to build a structure for sharing & valuing their perspectives

## **Group 5**

LGBTQIA+ Working Group



# Community Working Groups

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## **Group 6**

Develop a means for professionals to share expertise and knowledge about particular fields & the importance & value of diversity

## **Group 7**

Develop list of businesses, industry leaders, community organizations, community members who can partner with specific projects

## **Group 8**

Develop inclusivity guide for community

## **Group 9**

Update E&I Website to include list of resources, etc.

## **Group 10**

Tribury Reads Together





# An Example of the Work of the Community (In Collaboration With the Region)

Community members, in collaboration with Region 15, are pleased to invite you to join us for a virtual event!

## STEM PROFESSIONALS PANEL



Panelists from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds will share their experiences to:

- build awareness of and inspire interest in related careers
- discuss their paths to STEM careers and contributions they have made to their fields
- respond to questions around what motivated them to pursue their careers and insights they'd like to offer to our community's young people.

**THURSDAY, MARCH 25, 7 PM**

Register for this event by clicking [here](#)

### PANELISTS:

**DR. MARIA AROLE**  
Pharmacist with  
+17 years  
experience in  
Medical Affairs

**MRS. ERIN BLACKWELL**  
Engineer with +20  
years experience in  
electrical, nuclear,  
and industrial  
engineering

**MR. ZUOXIAN HU**  
Software Developer  
with +20 years  
experience in  
building complex  
applications for  
financial institutions

**DR. BOB KUMI**  
Pharmaceutical  
Scientist &  
Regulatory Affairs  
Professional with  
+23 years  
experience

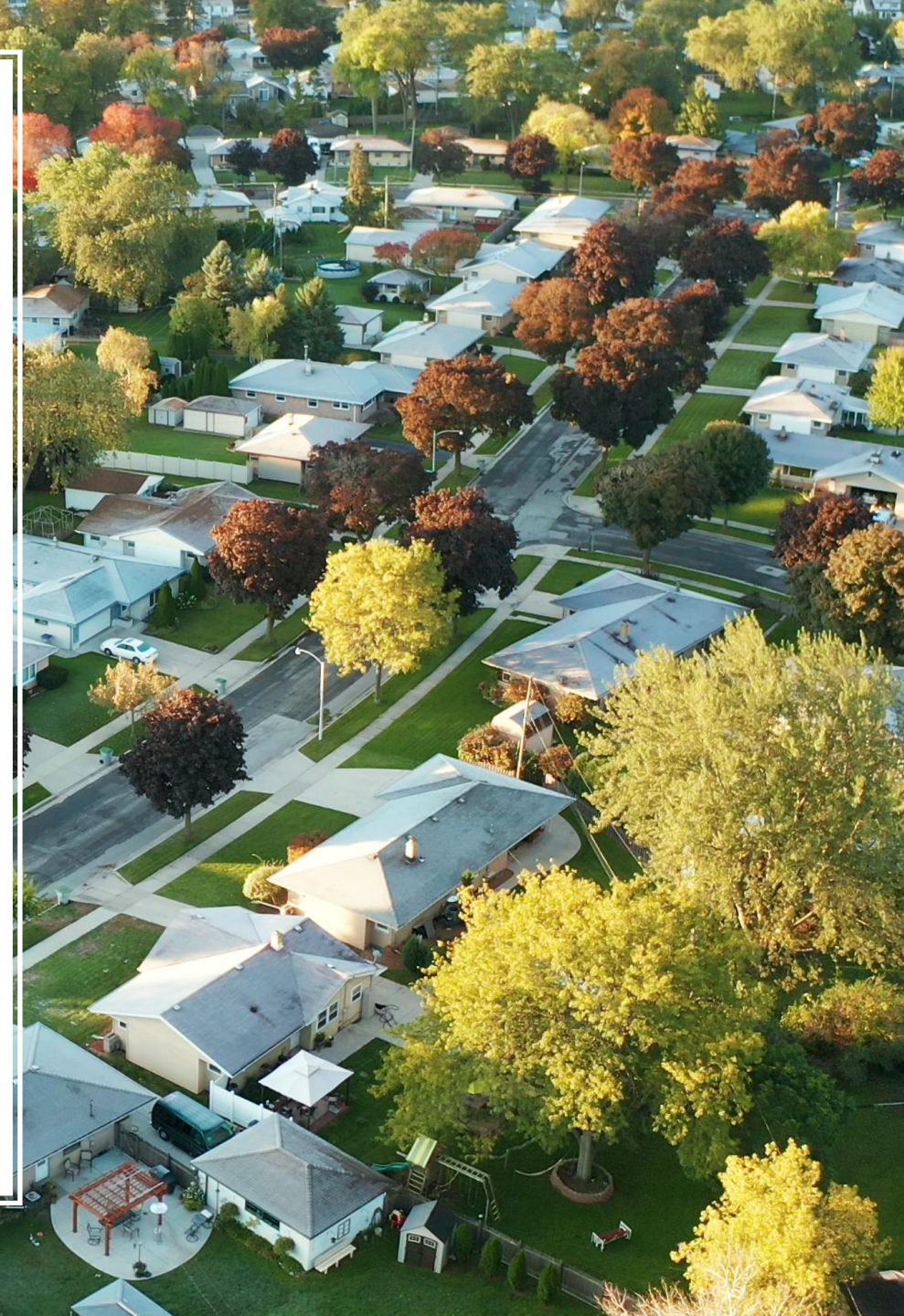




# Community Input – We Need Your Help

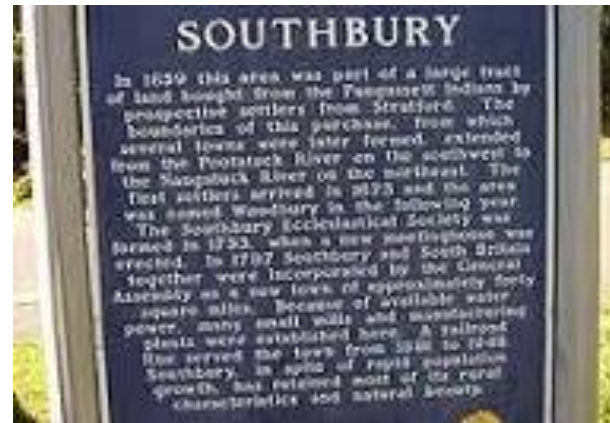
Survey to be distributed by one of the subcommittees:

- What topics do you think would be most beneficial for our local community?
- Do you have any facilitators, speakers, panel participants to suggest?
- Medium that should be used for presentation of topic?
  - Virtual
  - In person
  - In person with virtual option





# An Example of the Impact of the Work on the Community...



# Region 15 Students...

**GOAL:** For *Region 15 students* to respect and have compassion for all aspects of diversity: race, ethnicity, gender, social class, ability, religion, appearance, and sexual orientation.

A) Commitment:

- Ensure opportunities for students to regularly share their voices, needs, and aspirations

B) Commitment:

- Attend to Region 15 students' wellbeing and inclusivity

C) Commitment:

- Students will have multiple opportunities to learn about diverse perspectives across the PK-12 curriculum



# Region 15 Staff...

**Goal:** *For Region 15 staff* to respect and have compassion for all aspects of diversity: race, ethnicity, gender, social class, ability, religion, appearance, and sexual orientation.

A) Commitment:

- Capacity building of Region 15 staff on diversity, cultural competency, equity, anti-bias education, anti-racist education, and social justice

B) Commitment:

- Increase diversity of Region 15 workforce

C) Commitment:

- Ensure inclusivity of diverse perspectives across the PK-12 curriculum

D) Commitment:

- Establish Equity, Anti-Bias, Anti-Racism, and Gender Inclusivity Policies and Practices

E) Commitment:

- Communicate clearly with Region 15 community





# What the Work is **NOT:**

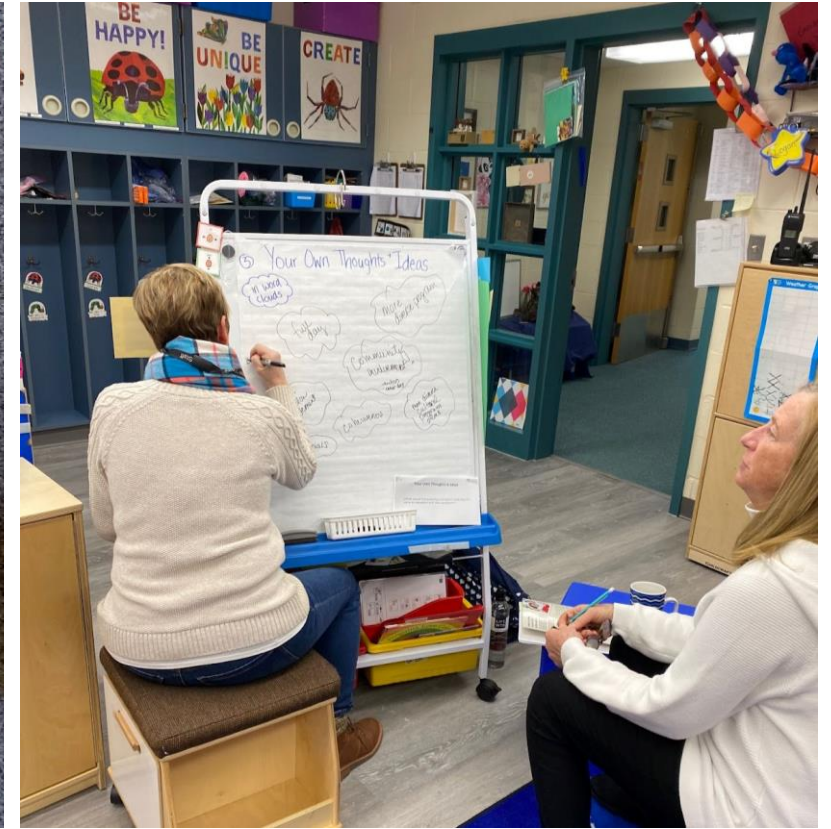
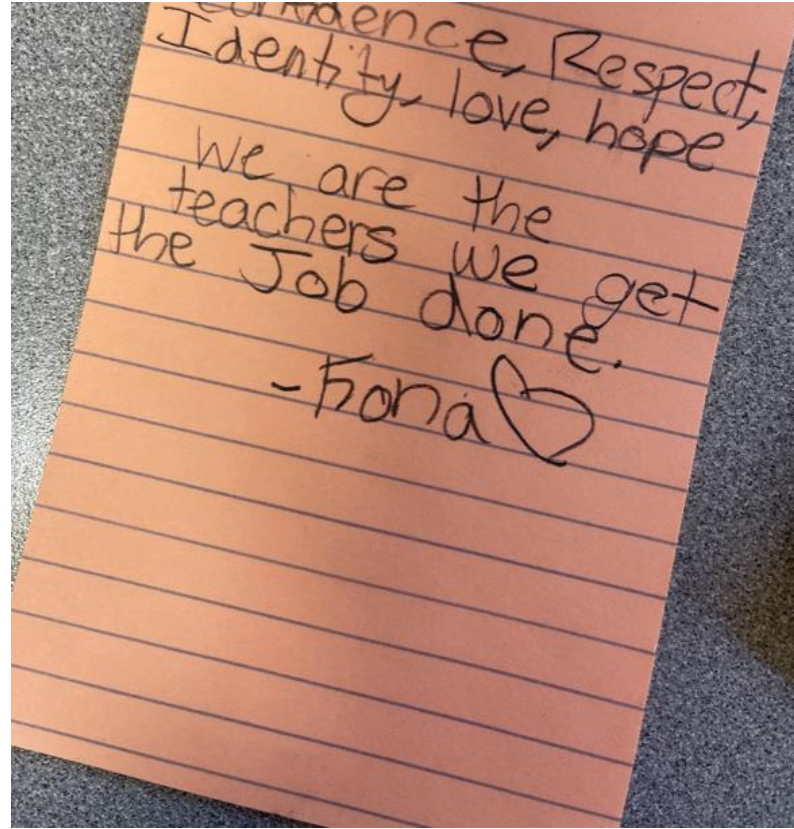
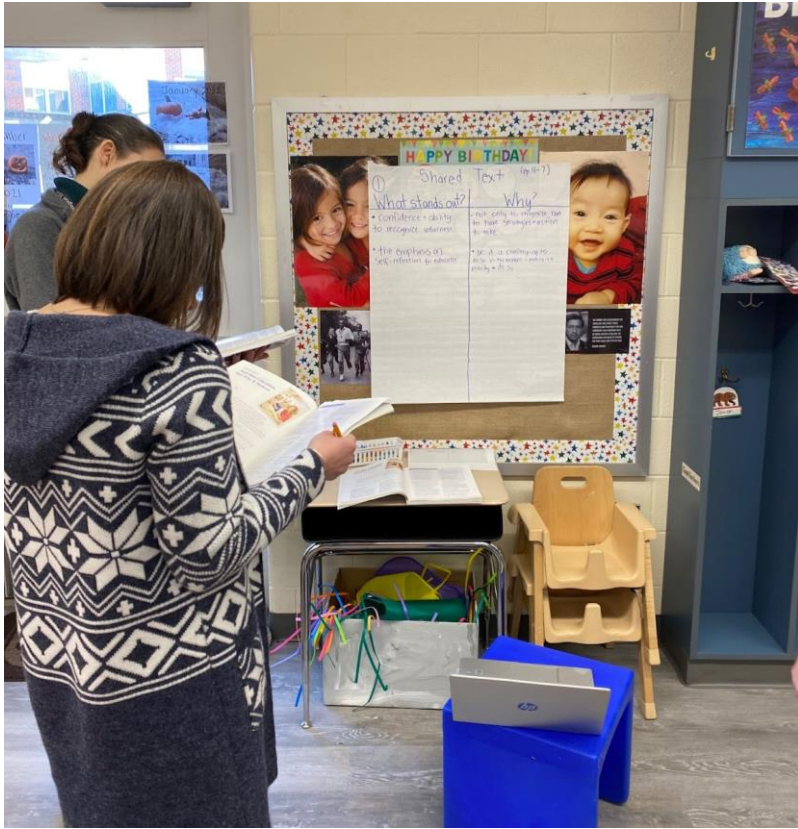
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- This is **NOT** about Critical Race Theory (CRT)
  - (which is only taught in higher education, by the way)
- This is **NOT** about pushing a “liberal agenda”
- This is **NOT** about trying to get people to change their religion, sexuality, gender, family unit, etc.



# What the Work Is: Cultural Competence





# Work at the Preschool Level: Book Study

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## Grade 2 ELA, Informational Writing – Incorporating Text features

- Labeling text features (captions, bold print, subheadings, titles, etc.) using family photo.
- Helps with content but also with confidence, social awareness, providing feedback and affirmations

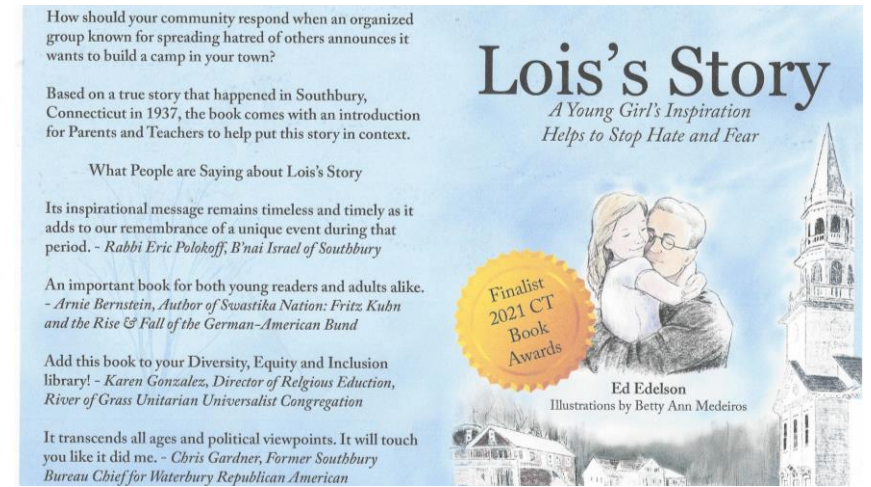


# Elementary – Grade 4 ELA, *Lois's Story*

- Used during Grade 4 historical fiction unit
- How can local history be used to engage students in practicing informed action?

Students:

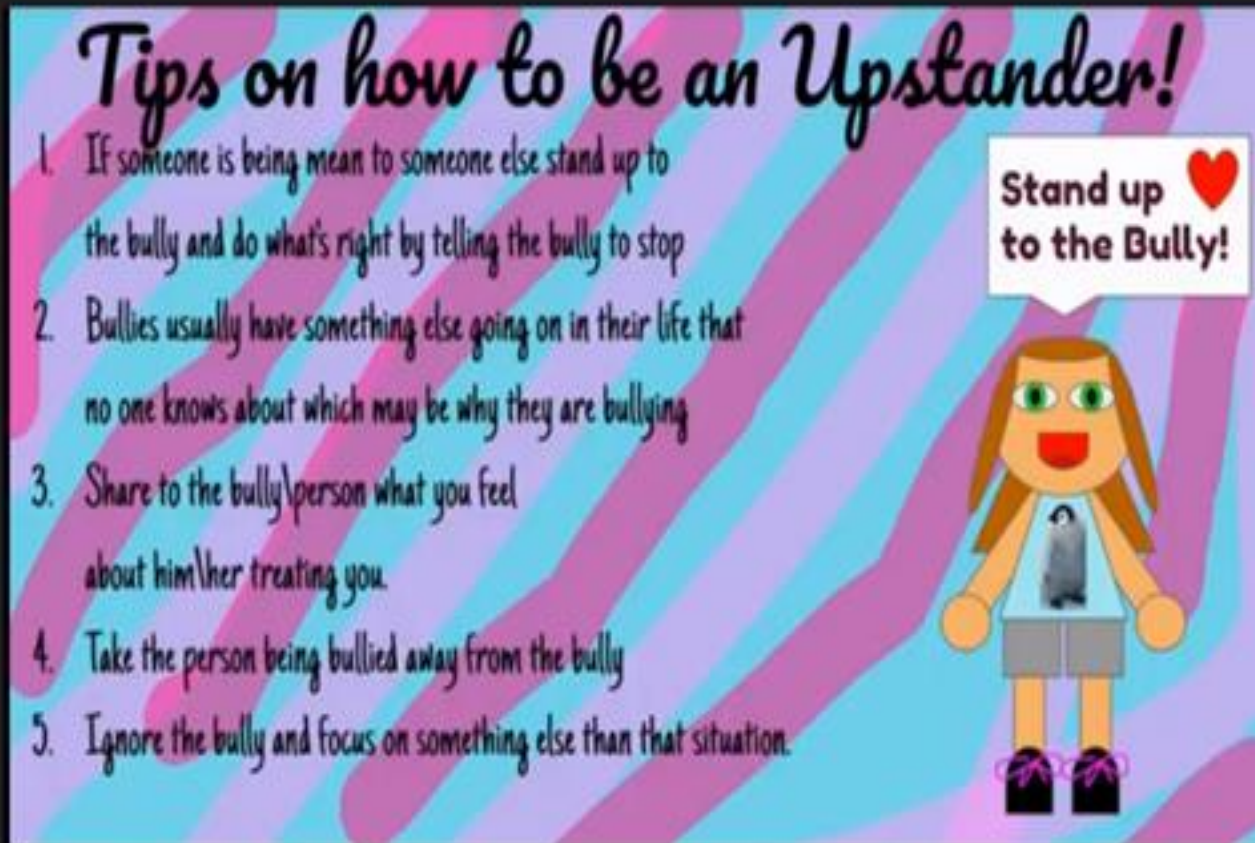
- practice reading analytically,
- synthesize complicated narratives,
- compare and contrast themes,
- incorporate nonfiction research into their reading





# Long Meadow Elementary School Upstander Club

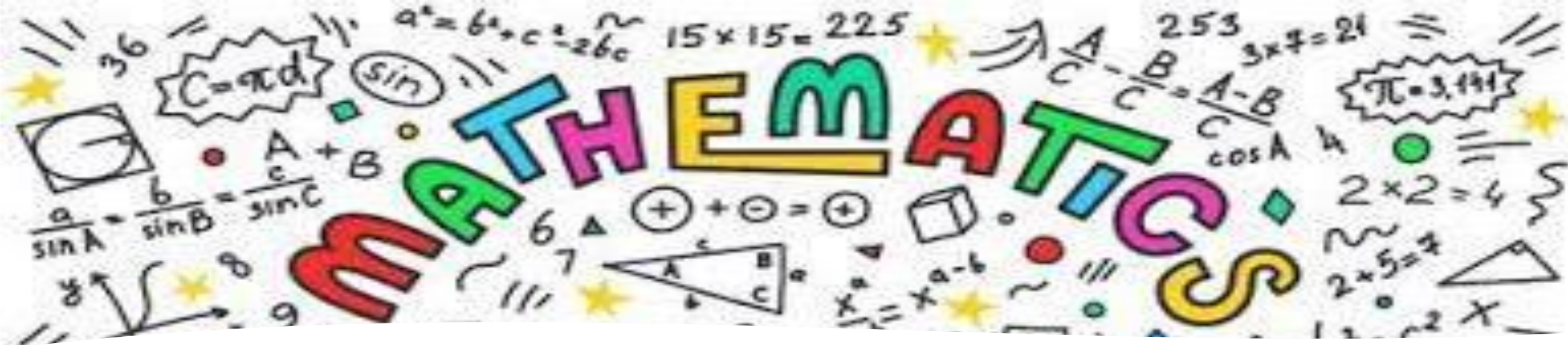
- Started by a 4<sup>th</sup> grader at LMES after reading Lois's Story
- 54 out of 80 4<sup>th</sup> graders joined the new club
- Members signed the following pledge:



*Report: Pentagon  
Says STEM  
Education Deficit  
is Weakening  
America – The  
National Interest*

“In July, Admiral (Ret) William McRaven, the former U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) commander and chancellor of the University of Texas, was straightforward when pressed about which national security issue kept him up at night: [‘K-12 education.’](#)”

According to Admiral McRaven, ‘unless we are giving opportunity and a quality education to the young men and women in the United States, then we won't have the right people to be able to make the right decisions about our national security...They won't have an understanding of different cultures. They won't have an understanding of different ideas. They won't be critical thinkers.’”



- America's STEM Crisis Threatens Our National Security – American Affairs Journal
- America's High-Tech STEM Crisis – Forbes
- Why Are There So Few Women Mathematicians?– The Atlantic
- Blacks, Latinos feel unwelcome in STEM careers. And that's a big problem for our economy – USA Today



# Why is it important to understand diversity in mathematics?

Developed of ZERO: Timeline shows the development of zero throughout the world. The first recorded zero appeared in Mesopotamia around 3 B.C. The Mayans invented it independently circa 4 A.D. It was later devised in India in the mid-fifth century, spread to Cambodia near the end of the seventh century, and into China and the Islamic countries at the end of the eighth.

**Zero reached western Europe in the 12th century (Scientific American)**

**Muhammad ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi was a 9th-century Muslim mathematician and astronomer.** He is known as the “father of algebra”, a word derived from the title of his book, Kitab al-Jabr. His pioneering work offered practical answers for land distribution, rules on inheritance and distributing salaries.



Hindu-Arabic numerals, set of 10 symbols—1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 0—that represent numbers in the decimal number system. They originated in India in the 6th or 7th century and were **introduced to Europe through the writings of Middle Eastern mathematicians, especially al-Khwarizmi and al-Kindi, about the 12th century.**

# “Who is a Mathematician?” Project

It involved reflection on and building of our own **math identities**, expanding our understanding of who **mathematicians are** and how they **impact the world**.

**Session 1: What are students’ conceptions of who a mathematician is?**

Objective: Students will reflect on their initial conceptions of who a mathematician is.

**Session 2: Math Identity**

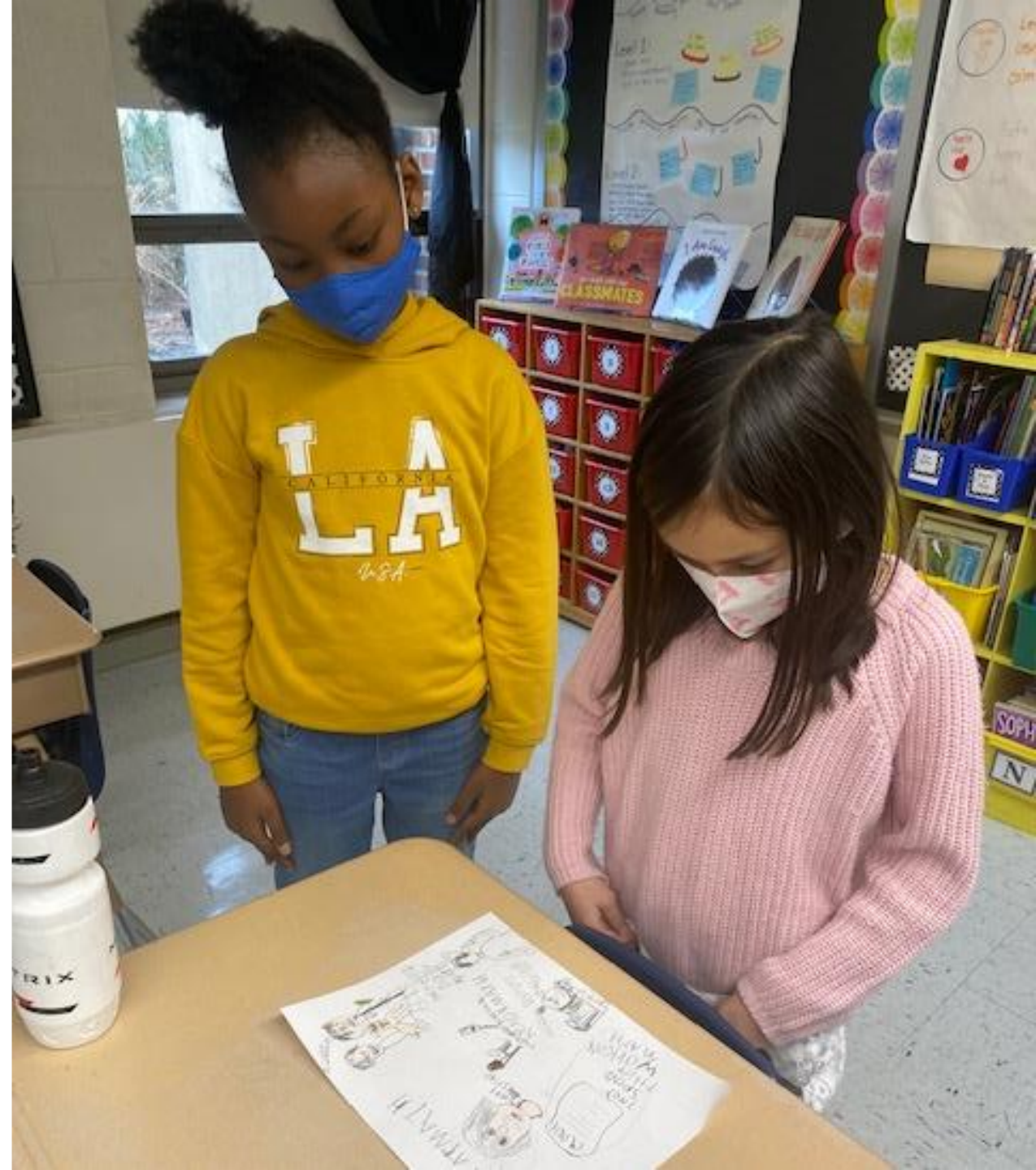
Objective: Students will develop their math identities/autobiography.

**Session 3: Deepening Our Conceptions of Who a Mathematician Is: Biographies, Part I**

Objective: Students will select and research historically excluded mathematicians.

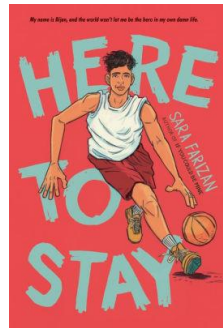
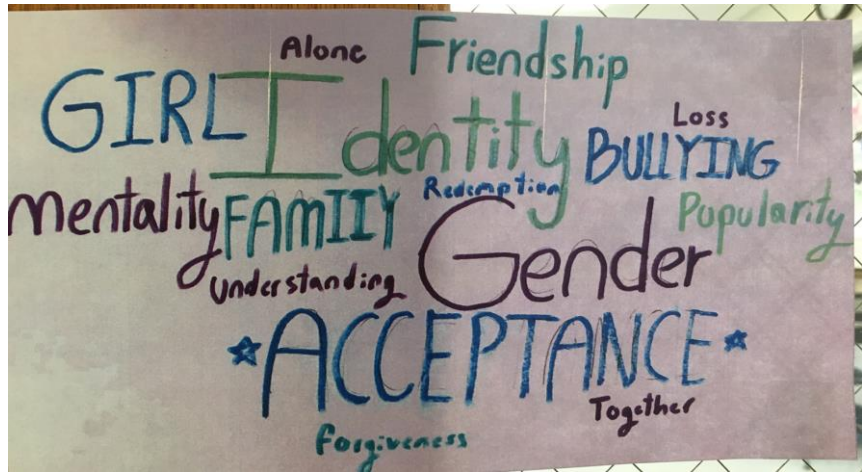
**Session 4: Deepening Our Conceptions of Who a Mathematician Is: Biographies, Part II**

Objective: Students will revise their construct of who a mathematician is and what a mathematician does.

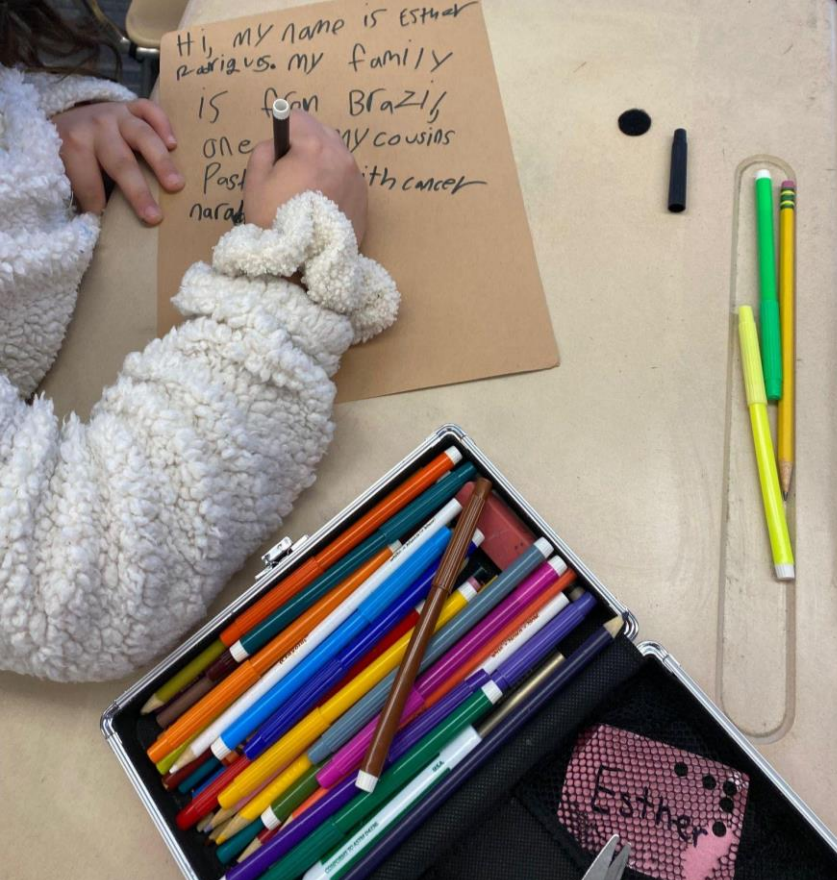




**Words can Hurt...**  
**Words can Heal...**  
**What did yours do today?**

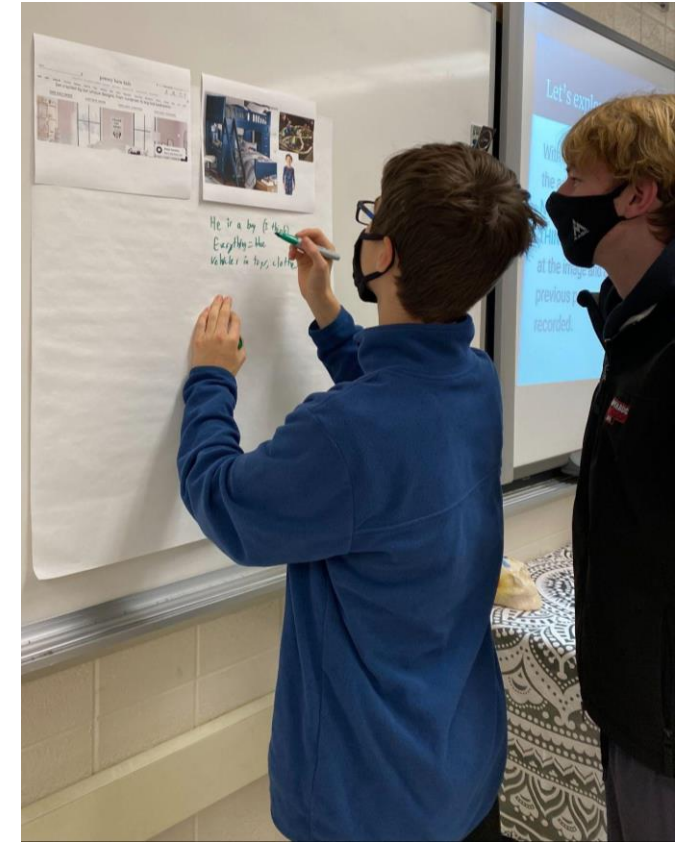
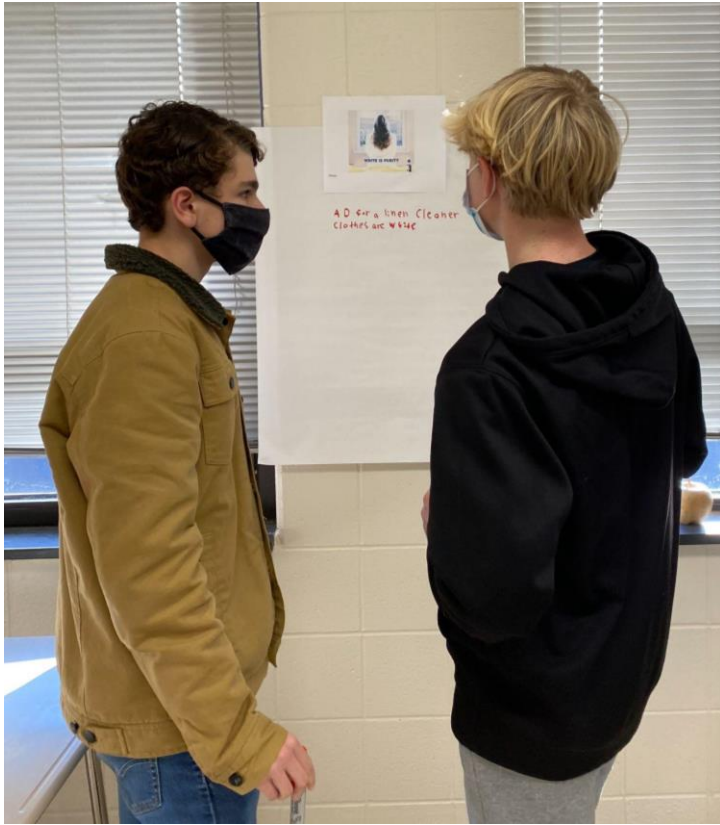






Authentic Audiences for HS Students...



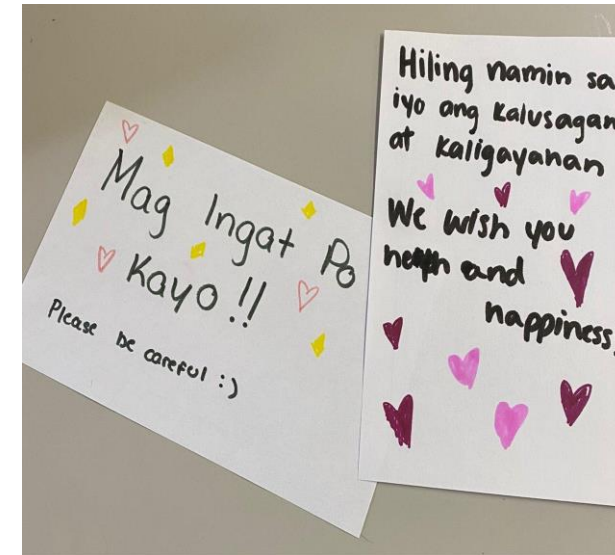


# Grade 9 English – Of Mice and Men



# Asian Student Union

## Heart of Dinner 愛心餐







PHS LatinX Club



PHS GSA



PHS Embrace Diversity Club

# Other STUDENT CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS

- PHS LatinX Club
- PHS Embrace Diversity Club
- Gender & Sexuality Alliance at PHS, MMS, RMS
- LMES Upstander Club

In the Future:

- PHS Black Student Union



# Monthly Equity & Inclusion Newsletters: R15 Staff & Community



- To showcase the work of R15 students and staff
- To inform about various nationally designated days/months
- To build an awareness of learning opportunities that are available
- To educate on various topics related to welcoming and inclusive schools & communities through videos, books, etc.



# Professional Learning Opportunities





- Daily work with the TIR
- The Arts: *Together for Students...A Community of Learners. Professional Development Implicit Bias* with Consultant Kathy Taylor, JD, Esq.
- Purposeful Planning – meeting the needs of *all* students
- Elementary Math & Literacy Plays during wrap time
- Differentiation and Scaffolding
- NCCJ Anti Bias Training
- Dismantling Racism Conference
- Contracting RISE to work with HS athletics (students and staff) beginning this summer..





# A Few of the RISE Board of Directors

Name	Title
PAUL TAGLIABUE	Chair, RISE; Former Commissioner, NFL; Senior of Counsel, Covington & Burling
STEPHEN M. ROSS	Vice Chair and Founder, RISE; Chairman of the Board and Managing General Partner, Miami Dolphins
PETE BEVACQUA	NBC Sports, President
MICHAEL J. MCNULTY III	USTA Chairman of the Board and President
STEVE PHELPS	NASCAR President
DON GARBER	Commissioner, MLS
ROGER GOODELL	Commissioner, NFL
ROB MANFRED	Commissioner, MLB
SETH WAUGH	PGA of America, CEO
KEVIN MARTINEZ	VP of Corporate Citizenship, ESPN
MAX SIEGEL	CEO, USA Track & Field

# At a Glance...

## Work of the Teacher in Residence.

- Classroom collaborations:
  - **126** staff members
  - **150** classes
    - Multiple collaborations throughout the school year with many of these faculty members/classes
    - If 20 students were in each class, **approx. 3,000** students
- 20 Professional Development sessions
  - **> 300 staff members**
- **457** total engagements with stakeholders as of 5/1/22



# “Mirrors, Windows, & Sliding Glass Doors” – Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop, 1990

“ When children cannot find themselves reflected in the books they read, or when the images they see are distorted, negative, or laughable, they learn a powerful lesson about how they are devalued in the society of which they are a part. ”



“We are all beautifully different – so it is important for children to see themselves and others portrayed positively on the pages of picture books.” (Andy McCormack)

“When our learners see themselves reflected in our curriculum and learning environments, it says to them, ‘I see you. You belong here. You have a place in math, science, literature — in all learning spaces and all learning opportunities. You belong here.’”

“The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story.” (Adichie, 2009)





# Increase Staff Diversity in Region 15

- Council developed interview questions on diversity and inclusivity
  - Teachers/ paraprofessionals
  - Administrators
- Variety of platforms for job postings, including Nemnet
- Recruitment Fairs
  - In person
  - Virtual
- R15 Participation in Connecticut Teacher Residency Program (TPR)
  - 2021-2022
  - 2022-2023
  - R15 Math Coach teaching math essentials to preservice students

**NEMNET**  
DIVERSITY RECRUITMENT

The mission of Region 15, a **collaborative community** committed to excellence, is to educate **every student** to be **productive, ethical, and engaged in a global society** through proven and innovative learning experiences **supported by its strong community** whose decision-making is based on the **best interest of all students.**







**Inclusivity means not ‘just we’re allowed to be there,’ but we are valued. I’ve always said: smart teams will do amazing things, but truly diverse teams will do impossible things.**

**~ Claudia Brind-Woody**