
Equity and Family Engagement Newsletter

Sept/Oct 2024



National Hispanic Heritage Month

¡Saludos!

In 2016, Mexican director Alejandro G. Iñárritu won his second Oscar for directing the film *The Revenant*. In his acceptance speech he referred to a line from the movie that said, “They don’t listen to you. They just see the color of your skin.” The line came from Leonardo DiCaprio’s character as he was speaking to his multiracial son. Later in the speech Iñárritu proclaimed, “What a great opportunity to our generation to liberate ourselves from all prejudice and tribal thinking.” Here is a person who is an immigrant in the United States and has had immense success. Even with that success, he recognized in himself that he was privileged and that he still had work to do on himself.

I am the proud son of Mexican immigrants who has experienced a good amount of success. I am still learning every day. Let’s celebrate our cultural heritage during this month of National Hispanic Latino Heritage Month. Let’s also strive to connect with one another and reinforce what binds us. It is possible for us to do both.

Pablo Ortega
Director of Equity and Family Engagement

Pictured to the right: Pablo Ortega (far right) accepting a proclamation from the City of Kirkland to commemorate National Hispanic/Latino Heritage Month from Mayor Kelli Curtis (far left) and Councilmember Neal Black (center).



In this newsletter you can expect:

Community News and Thank You

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Community News

Please welcome Dr. Xandra Peter as the new Equity and Strategic Engagement Manager. She will be supporting the Equity and Family Engagement Facilitators and district-wide policies and practices. She will be working in the Resource Center and visiting schools. Say hi when you see her around the district!



Equity and Strategic Engagement Manager

Tirow, Alii, Hafa Adai and Hello! I greet you in the languages of my people (alongside English): Carolinian, Palauan, and Chamorro.

My name is Dr. Xandra Peter (she/hers) and I am our Equity and Strategic Engagement Manager. I am Carolinian and Palauan from the islands of Palau and of Saipan in the Northern Mariana Islands, where I was born and raised.

I have spent the last seven years as an elementary school teacher in the Shoreline School District. During my time in the classroom, I was inspired by the energies, curiosities, and passions of students and families. While there, I also developed an interest in how educator practices can influence those, both positively and negatively. To nurture that growing interest, I attended the University of Washington and graduated from the Leadership for Learning (L4L) Ed.D program (alongside Dr. Savannah Milford and Dr. Tim Krieger).

All of that work has brought me to the Lake Washington School District. I find myself uniquely connected to the lives of our marginalized students and families. I moved to the Bellevue School District at the beginning of 8th grade and have personal experiences with being the only Brown student in most of my classes and what it took for my family to navigate the school systems out here.

In this role, I am informed by my personal histories, my Indigenous values, and the knowledges of marginalized communities. I am humbled to be in this position and am excited to support our school district to ensure that equity and justice are rooted into the foundation of all of the work that we do.

Ghilissow (Carolinian), sulang (Palauan), si yu'us ma'ase (Chamorro) and thank you!



THE FLOWER SHOP

Our 2024 Back-to-School Jam was a huge success. We were able to provide free school supplies, backpacks, food, haircuts, games, and community resources to over 550 LWSD students.

We could not have done even a fraction of this without our Redmond Elementary team, including principal Ann Bohrsen-Thola and the amazing Shane Lux. Their hard work throughout the event made a huge impact.

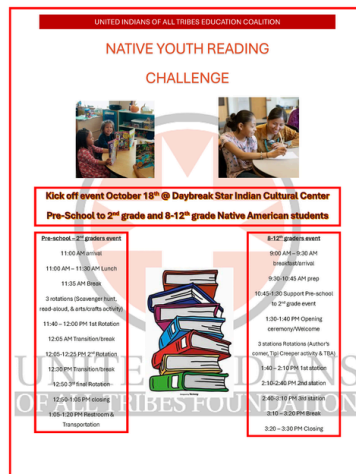
We would also like to extend a huge thank you to our district and community volunteers. Our students and families felt welcomed and safe in our event and greatly appreciated your help in providing these resources. A special thank you to Timberlake Church in Redmond and HOTWORX in Redmond Town Center for their support!

Upcoming Community Events



Indigenous Peoples Day Awareness Event

Come celebrate the beauty of Indigenous people with us on October 14th at Lake Washington High School. The event begins at 6:30 and will feature drumming, singing, dancing, and presentations. All are welcome!



Native Youth Reading Challenge Kickoff

This event is presented by the United Indians of All Tribes Education Coalition at the Daybreak Star Indian Cultural Center on October 18th beginning at 9:00AM for older Native American students and 11:00 for younger students.



Annual ENAEP Veteran's Pow-Wow

The Pow-Wow will take place on October 26th at the Juanita High School Athletic Center. It is free and open to the public beginning at 6:00PM. There will be drumming, exhibitions, vendors, and food for purchase.

Resources for Hispanic Heritage Month

Centro Cultural Mexicano centroculturalmexicano.org

- El Centro Cultural Mexicano se esfuerza por inspirar la participación inclusiva de la comunidad en todos los aspectos de la educación, cultura y sociedad al brindar oportunidades para crear un futuro positivo.
- Centro Cultural Mexicano strives to inspire inclusive participation by the community in all aspects of education, culture, and society by providing opportunities to create a positive future.
- All services and programs are bilingual in Spanish and English, including access to basic needs, small business supports, education supports, cultural engagement, youth and family engagement, and advocacy.

National Museum of the American Latino [Hispanic Heritage Month](http://HispanicHeritageMonth)

- A page presented by the National Museum of the American Latino at the Smithsonian that offers a variety of resources about Hispanic Heritage Month, including virtual exhibits and educational resources.

Brazilian Community Services [Brazilian Community Services](http://BrazilianCommunityServices)

- Brazilian Community Services acts as a facilitator for the Brazilian immigrant community in the PNW area, promoting integration into American society. Our goal is to be a cultural navigator, advocate, and inspire with love and compassion so that our people can build a better tomorrow.

Book and Media Recommendations

Please be mindful that while these media sources can offer valuable insights into rich perspectives, they may not fully capture the diverse experiences of all people within a particular identity group. It is important to recognize that each student's and family's journey is unique and cannot be wholly represented by a single narrative.



Children



[River of Mariposas](#)

A young girl dreams of the land's historic mariposas amarillas and is determined to re-create their glory, even if her butterflies are made of paper. But when nature thwarts her plans, life, magic, and yes, even the rain, bring something more beautiful than she ever could have crafted.



[How to Speak in Spanglish](#)

In this charming and delightful picture book, Sami shares the joys of Spanglish with his skeptical abuela and diverse community.



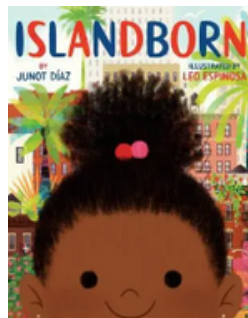
[Until Someone Listens](#)

When Estela Juarez's mom is deported to Mexico, Estela knows she has to speak up for her family. Told in Estela's own words, *Until Someone Listens* is a true story about a young girl finding her voice and using it to make change.



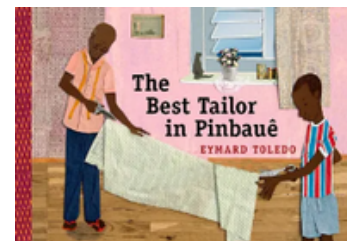
[A Land of Books: Dreams of Young Mexihcah Word Painters](#)

Award-winning author-illustrator Duncan Tonatiuh sheds light on the significance of Aztec manuscripts and culture.



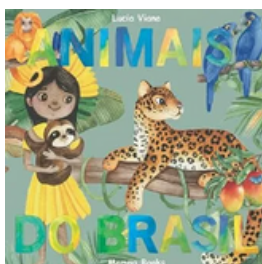
[Islandborn](#)

From New York Times bestseller and Pulitzer Prize winner Junot Díaz comes a debut picture book about the magic of memory and the infinite power of the imagination.



[The Best Tailor in Pinbauê](#)

The first book written and illustrated by Eymard Toledo shows one boy's pluck when his beautiful town is ruined by the arrival of a gray, dusty factory.



[Animais do Brasil \(Portuguese Edition\)](#)

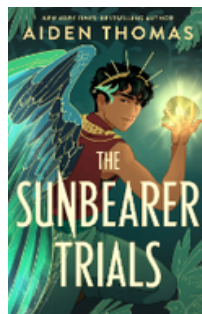
This is the first in a series of educational books, focused on the history, culture, fauna and flora of Brazil, with a special focus on the preservation of its biodiversity.

Teens and Young Adult



[Furia](#)

An #ownvoices contemporary YA set in Argentina, about a rising soccer star who must put everything on the line—even her blooming love story—to follow her dreams.



[The Sunbearer Trials](#)

Welcome to *The Sunbearer Trials*, where teen semidioses compete in a series of challenges with the highest of stakes, in this electric new Mexican-inspired fantasy from Aiden Thomas, the *New York Times* bestselling author of *Cemetery Boys*.



[The Ghosts of Rancho Espanto](#)

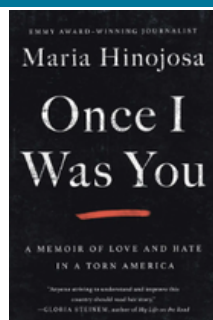
A new middle grade fantasy full of humor and heart from Adrianna Cuevas—author of the Pura Belpré Honor Book *The Total Eclipse of Nestor Lopez*—perfect for fans of Claribel Ortega's *The Ghost Squad* and Louis Sachar's *Holes*.



[The Moonlit Vine](#)

Fourteen-year-old Taína just learned that she is a descendant of a long line of strong Taíno women, but will knowing this help her bring peace and justice to her family and community?

Adults



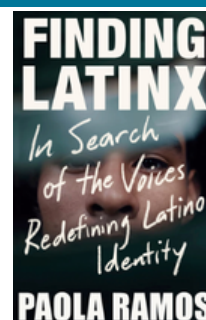
[Once I Was You: A Memoir of Love and Hate in a Torn America](#)

Maria shares her intimate experience growing up Mexican American on the South Side of Chicago. She offers a personal and illuminating account of how the rhetoric around immigration has not only long informed American attitudes toward outsiders, but also sanctioned willful negligence and profiteering at the expense of our country's most vulnerable populations—charging us with the broken system we have today.



[En Comunidad: Lessons for Centering the Voices and Experiences of Bilingual Latinx Students](#)

En Comunidad brings bilingual Latinx students' perspectives to the center of our classrooms. Its culturally and linguistically sustaining lessons include a study of language practices in students' lives and texts, laying out a path for students' and families' storytelling, a critical analysis of historical narratives impacting current realities, ways to develop a social justice stance, and the use of poetry in sustaining the community



[Finding Latinx: In Search of the Voices Redefining Latino Identity](#)

In this empowering cross-country travelogue, journalist and activist Paola Ramos embarks on a journey to find the communities of people defining the controversial term, "Latinx." Drawing on intensive field research as well as her own personal story, Ramos chronicles how "Latinx" has given rise to a sense of collectivity and solidarity among Latinos unseen in this country for decades.

Articles:

EdSurge created a three-part series of conversations with Latino educators and edtech experts.

- [Are Latino 'Systems of Knowledge' Missing From Education Technology? - EdSurge News](#): Teachers see inadequate design, unequal access and cultural barriers in their classrooms.
- [Latino Teachers Share How Their Communities Can Reshape Education — If Given the Chance - EdSurge News](#): This is the second in a three-part series of conversations with Latino educators and edtech experts.
- [Does 'Toxic Gratitude' Harm Latino Educators in the Workplace? - EdSurge News](#): This is the third in a three-part series of conversations with Latino educators and edtech experts.

["I'm Brazilian, Not Brazilian American": The Experiences of Second-Generation Brazilian Adolescents Preserving Their Heritage Language and Resisting Assimilation](#): Culture and heritage language (HL) preservation are crucial to developing children of immigrants' ethnic and social identity, creating a sense of belonging, and fostering family and ethnic community support. However, numerous challenges permeate the experiences of underrepresented ethnolinguistic groups like Brazilian immigrants who are largely invisible in the United States.

Podcasts:

[Modern Immigrant Podcast](#) Being an immigrant has been one of the most difficult and extraordinary experiences in my life. Join me while I interview immigrants that have decided to tell their stories. Ser inmigrante ha sido una de las experiencias más difíciles y maravillosas en mi vida. Acompáñame mientras entrevisto inmigrantes que decidieron contar sus historias.
(English and Spanish)

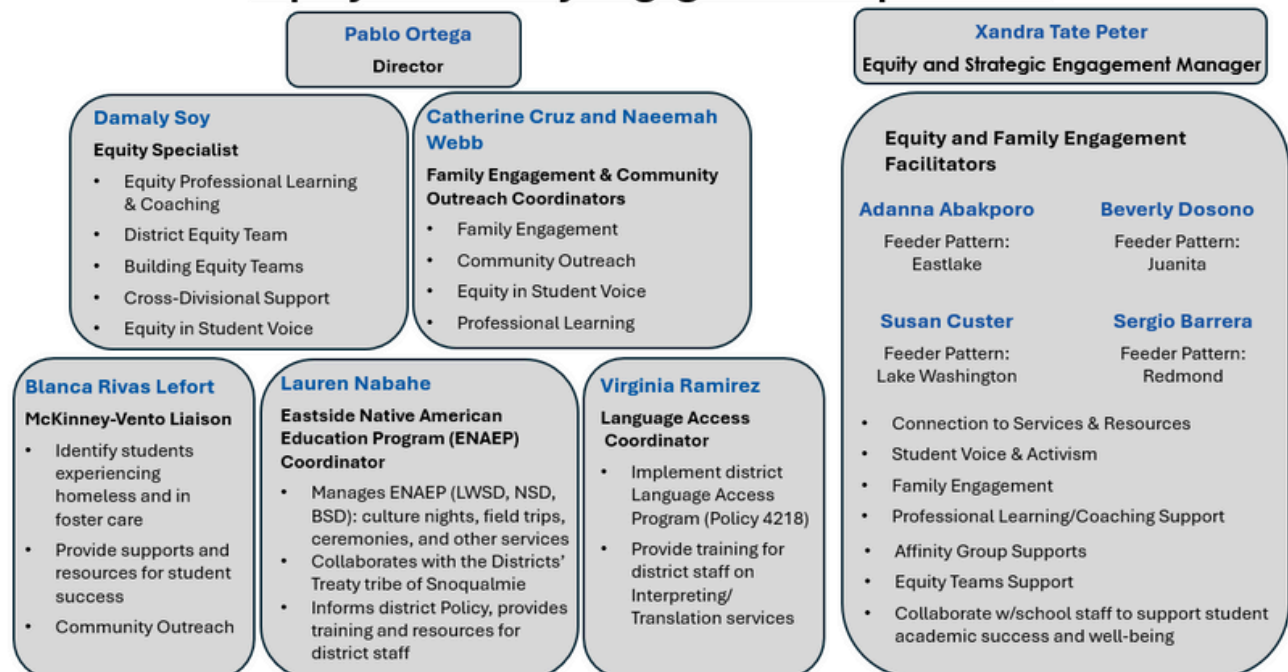
[ShiftCast](#) ShiftCast is a podcast in Portuguese aimed at sharing the lived experiences of Brazilian people in the United States.

[Learning from Latino and Multilingual Youth – Podcast Episode 235 - IDRA](#) Jonathan Peraza Campos, M.S., speaks with Dr. Jyoti Kaneria and doctoral candidate Emily Lemon about their community-engaged research and the implications it can have in the classroom and policymaking spaces. In their conversation, they discover similarities in how their own experience was central to their work. Based in Georgia, both have been organizers, educators, and researchers pertaining to Latino youth, multilingual learners, culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies, ethnic studies, immigration policy, and mental health.

Contacts

[Links to bios](#)

Equity and Family Engagement Department



Holidays and Observances

In addition to Labor Day, Constitution Day and Halloween, September and October also include the following observances and holidays. This is not a complete list and focuses on underrepresented cultures and communities.

- **September 15 to October 15- National Hispanic Heritage Month:** Celebrates the contributions, heritage and culture of Hispanic and Latino Americans.
 - **September 16 or 21 -Mawlid Al-Nabi (Also known as Milad Al-Nabi):** The observance of the birthday of Islam founder Prophet Muhammad, which is celebrated in Rabi' al-awwal, the third month in the Islamic calendar. Sunni Muslims celebrate it five days earlier than Shi'a Muslims.
 - **September 23 - Bi Visibility Day:** Seeks to draw attention to public policy concerns and foster respect for bi+ individuals and communities.
 - **October Full Month- National Bullying Prevention Month:** campaign to unite communities nationwide to educate and raise awareness of bullying prevention.
 - **October Full Month- National Disability Employment Awareness Month:** Recognizes the contributions of workers with disabilities.
 - **October Full Month- LGBT History Month:** Marks and celebrates the lives and achievements of lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender people in the United States.
 - **October 2- International Day of Nonviolence:** Marked on the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, leader of the Indian independence movement and pioneer of the philosophy and strategy of non-violence, a U.N commemoration promoting the principle of non-violence and the desire to secure a culture of peace, tolerance and understanding.
 - **October 3 to 12- Navaratri:** Nine-day festival celebrating the triumph of good over evil. It worships God in the form of the universal mother commonly referred to as Durga, Devi or Shakti, and marks the start of fall.
 - **October 3 to 4- Rosh Hashanah:** Beginning of the Jewish New Year and first of the High Holy Days, which marks the beginning of a ten-day period of penitence and spiritual renewal.
 - **October 11- Coming Out Day:** Encourages honesty and openness about being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. Commemorates October 11, 1987, when 500,000 people marched on Washington, DC, for gay and lesbian equality.
 - **October 12- Yom Kippur:** The "Day of Atonement" marks the end of the Ten Days of Penitence that begin with Rosh Hashanah.
 - **October 12- Dussehra/Dassera:** Anniversary of the day when Rama killed the evil demon Ravana. Also known as Durga Puja, which celebrates the goddess Durga.
 - **October 12- Dia de la Raza:** "Race Day" is commemorated on October 12th in recognition of the mixed Indigenous and European heritage in Mexico and among many Latin American communities.
 - **October 14- Indigenous People's Day:** Celebrates and honors Native American history and culture. [The second Monday of October is also marked as a U.S. federal holiday, Columbus Day. Many people are opposed to the celebration of a man who led and committed atrocities against Indigenous people. Some states and cities in the U.S. have officially changed the day to Indigenous People's Day. Similarly, it is celebrated as Día de la Raza, "Day of the Race", in Spanish-speaking countries and communities.]
 - **October 17 to 24- Sukkot:** The week-long "Feast of Booths" commemorates the 40-year wandering of the Israelites in the desert on the way to the Promised Land. (October 17) -
 - **October 24- Shemini Atzeret:** "The Eighth [Day] of Assembly" observed on the day immediately following Sukkot.
 - **October 24- United Nations Day:** Commemorates the founding of the world organization in 1945.
 - **October 25- Simchat Torah:** "Rejoicing in the Torah" celebrates the conclusion of the public reading of the Pentateuch (first five books of the Hebrew Bible) and its beginning anew.
 - **October 31- Reformation Day:** Commemorates the beginning of the Protestant Reformation in 1517.
 - **October 31- Bandi-Chhor Diwas:** A commemorative occasion having no fixed date which occurs in October or November and celebrates the release of the Sixth Guru Har Gobind Sahib from imprisonment and coincides with Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights.
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