
Equity and Family Engagement Newsletter

February 2025



Black History Month

As I watch my children grow, I often think about our ancestors' stories passed from one generation to the next. The stories shaped their identity, values, and sense of belonging in the world.

Removed seven generations from slavery, my children are the first to live outside of poverty, and the fourth generation to use education as an accelerator. I cannot tell my family history without the context of the Atlantic Slave Trade, slavery, the Civil War, Reconstruction, the Great Migration, WWI, WWII, Vietnam, the Civil Rights Movement, and the ongoing fights for equity and inclusion.

Our story is one of freedom, struggle, hope, striving, achievement, and progress, with threads to a foreign ancestral land woven into an identity formed through our journey. While my family's story resembles others, it is not the entirety of history. I cannot trace my ancestry beyond the Emancipation Proclamation, yet Black people have been in North America before the United States. Our existence predates the creation of race as a social construct, and collectively we have contributed to the advancement of humankind since time immemorial. Our existence and contributions deserve inclusion, studying, and teaching.

Beyond Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks, I learned Black history from my mother, the PhD students, and professors who raised me until I entered high school. I took a class co-taught by Susan Smith and John Davis called Multi-Cultural Leadership. They always challenged us with the question: "Who is speaking and whose voice is missing?" Mrs. Matthews, my AP English teacher, assigned me the Autobiography of Malcolm X, Maya Angelou, and Nikki Giovanni, where I began to see myself in my studies.

Teaching Black history should be done throughout the year, but celebrating Black History Month is an opportunity to fill in gaps in the curriculum, acknowledge the contributions of Black people, give students the chance to see themselves in the curriculum, and allow others to hear history from another perspective. Celebrating Black History Month serves as a reminder to continue striving towards equity through inclusion.

Diana Williams
Cultural Liaison



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Upcoming Community Events

Happy Lunar New Year!

This year, 2025, is the Year of the Dragon. It is important to note that Lunar New Year is celebrated by numerous Asian countries and communities worldwide, though it is often referred to as Chinese New Year. While some traditions are similar across countries, there is also beautiful diversity in how it is celebrated. Here are the names for Lunar New Year in some of the places that observe the holiday:

Vietnam celebrates **Tết Nguyên Đán** (Tết for short)

Korea celebrates **Seollal** (설날)

China celebrates **Chunjie** (春节 – in Mandarin)

Mongolia celebrates **Tsagaan Sar**

Tibet celebrates **Losar** (Begins February 21, 2023)

(Source: [Celebrate Lunar New Year 2025 with MaiStoryBook](#))

Listed below are events, resources, and book lists to help build a greater understanding about Lunar New Year.

NAAM | Black History Month

This February, the Northwest African American Museum invites you to join us for *Coloring Outside the Lines*, a month-long celebration of creativity, resilience and the trailblazing spirit in Black communities.

We the People and the American Dream - Washington State Historical Society

Thursday, February 20, 2025

5:30 – 8:00 PM

1911 Pacific Avenue, Tacoma, WA 98402

Lunar New Year – City of Kirkland

Saturday, February 01, 2025

2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Peter Kirk Community Center

352 Kirkland Avenue, 98033

2025 Lunar New Year Celebration | City of Sammamish

Saturday, February 01, 2025

1:00 PM to 4:00 PM

CWU Sammamish

120 228th Ave NE

Sammamish, WA 98074

Lunar New Year Celebration | Seattle Chinatown-International District

Saturday, February 22, 2025

11:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Hing Hay Park

423 Maynard Ave S

Seattle, WA 98104

Resources

[Black Lives Matters at School's Annual Week of Action](#)

This year's week of action we uplift our Intergenerational principle. We have an obligation to join together! As the road ahead requires people of all ages to lead, follow, and pass the baton as we move toward justice.

Additional resources for Black History Month

[ASALH - The Founders of Black History Month | About Black History Month](#)

Established on September 9, 1915, by Dr. Carter G. Woodson, we are the Founders of Black History Month and carry forth the work of our founder, the Father of Black History.

[2025 Black History Theme Executive Summary](#)

The 2025 Black History Month theme, African Americans, and Labor, focuses on the various and profound ways that work and working of all kinds – free and unfree, skilled, and unskilled, vocational and voluntary – intersect with the collective experiences of Black people.

[The Woodson Center's K-12 Black history and character curriculum](#)

This curriculum tells the stories of black Americans whose tenacity and resilience enabled them to overcome adversity and make invaluable contributions to our country. It also teaches character and decision-making skills that equip students to take charge of their futures. These lessons in black American excellence are free and publicly available for all.

Additional resources to support our immigrant, refugee, and undocumented students & families

[How Educators Can Help Undocumented Students - Informed Immigrant](#)

To help students and their families grapple with the stress that comes with this uncertainty, education and preparation can be useful tools to empower immigrants and help them regain some sense of control.

[Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network- Deportation Defense Actions Flyer](#)

Learn 4 Deportation Defense Actions you can take today to stand in solidarity with and help protect immigrant and refugee community members.

[Red Cards / Tarjetas Rojas | Immigrant Legal Resource Center | ILRC](#)

The ILRC's Red Cards help people assert their rights and defend themselves in many situations, such as when ICE agents go to a home.

- [KYR Brazilian Red Cards](#)

Resources for LGBTQIA+ students and families

[Pride Across the Bridge](#)

Servicing East King County, our mission is to create a safe, inclusive and equitable community for *2SLGBTQIA+ people closer to home through unique safe space events, sharing of vetted resources, and elevating opportunities for local advocacy.

[Lavender Rights Project](#)

Our organization disrupts oppressive systems that target Black gender diverse and intersex communities of color and lead to disproportionate levels of poverty, housing disparities, and gender-based violence, especially among Black and Indigenous people.

Lunar New Year

[Lunar New Year 2025: How It's Celebrated Across Asia And More You Need To Know](#)

[Lunar New Year 2025: A Guide to the Year of the Snake](#)

The Lunar New Year in 2025 welcomes the Year of the Snake, according to the Chinese lunar calendar. Celebrated by millions around the world, this is a time for cultural traditions, family reunions, and hopes for good fortune in the coming year.

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.



Black History Month Reading Lists

[2025 Black History Month Toolkit](#)

The Annual Black History Month Read-In is a curated list of selections for adults, youth, and young children by The North Carolina African American Heritage Commission.

[Black History Month Reads — a staff-created list from King County Library System](#)

Read about Black and African American history and stories of resistance. The 2025 theme is African Americans and Labor.

Lunar New Year Reading Lists

[Lunar New Year Reads — a staff-created list from King County Library System](#)

Celebrate with folktales, stories of family, art, and cultural traditions. Browse our list of books and themed coloring sheets for all ages.

[Celebrate Lunar New Year 2025 with MaiStoryBook](#)

In this festive lineup, you'll find legends of dragons and zodiac tales, colorful glowing lanterns and celebrations of the moon, and festivals of friends and family and feasts galore!

Immigrant, Refugee and Undocumented Stories Reading Lists

[Teaching About Immigration - Social Justice Books](#)

Books recommended by Social Justice Books on immigration and the immigrant experience with a focus on the United States.

[World Refugee Day: Refugee Picture Books and Resources – MaiStoryBook](#)

The goal is to create a scene portraying refugees not as passive victims, but as survivors creating community, joy, and new life even amidst a backdrop of war.

[World Refugee Reads — a staff-created list from King County Library System](#)

Read about the experiences of displaced people from around the world.

LGBTQIA+ Reading Lists

[LGBTQ+ - Social Justice Books](#)

Books recommended by Social Justice Books on gender diversity and LGBTQIA+ stories.

[Transgender Day of Visibility Reads 2025 — a staff-created list from King County Library System](#)

Find books by and about transgender and non-binary people.

[Transgender Awareness Week and Day of Remembrance Reads — a staff-created list from King County Library System](#)

Learn more about transgender identity and the fight for trans rights.

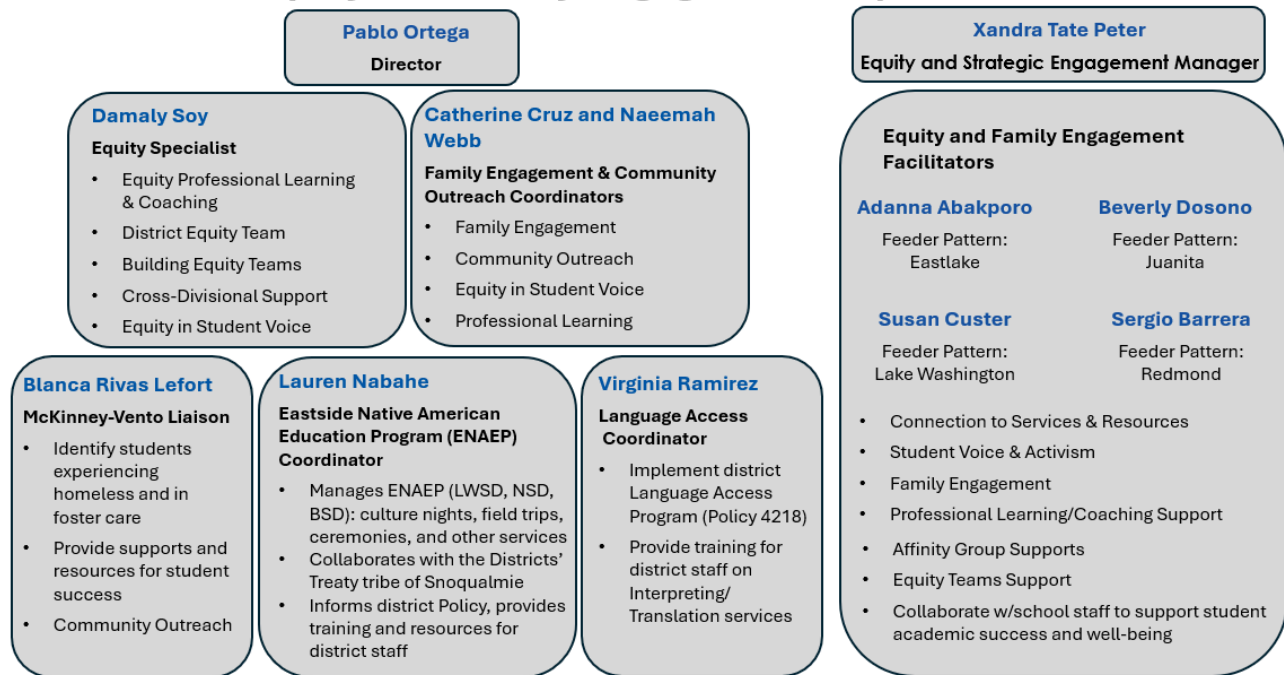
Holidays and Observances

This is not a complete list. As always, check in with students and families to ensure that their cultural celebrations are included.

2/1	Black History Month	Celebrate African American heritage and contributions to America.
2/1	National Freedom Day	Commemorates the signing of the 13th Amendment, which abolished slavery in 1865.
2/1	CTE Month	Raise awareness about CTE Program in schools and colleges, and career success.
2/2	Groundhog Day	Folklore says if the groundhog sees its shadow on this day and returns to its burrow, winter continues for 6 more weeks.
2/3	Elizabeth Blackwell's Birthday	British-born physician and the first woman to receive a medical degree in the U.S.
2/3	Norman Rockwell's Birthday	American painter and illustrator.
2/3-2/7	National School Counseling Week	Recognize and honor school counselors in helping students achieve school success and access to resources.
2/4	Rosa Parks' Birthday	African American civil rights activist, whom the U.S. Congress called "the first lady of civil rights" and "the mother of the freedom movement".
2/7	Laura Ingalls Wilder's Birthday	American writer.
2/12	Abraham Lincoln's Birthday	16th President of the U.S.
2/12	Magha Puja	Buddhist festival focuses on doing good deeds and purifying one's mind.
2/13	Tu B'Shvat	Jewish New Year's Day for Trees, and traditionally the first of the year for tithing fruit of trees. Now a day for environmental awareness and action, such as tree planting.
2/14	Valentine's Day	Celebrate and express love between family and friends.
2/15	Peter Kirk's Birthday	British-born American businessman who founded the City of Kirkland.
2/15	Nirvana Day	Commemorate the death of the Buddha when he attained complete nirvana.
2/16-2/22	Aromantic Spectrum Awareness Week	Annual, international event meant to spread awareness and acceptance of aromantic spectrum identities.
2/17	National PTA Founders Day	Honor and recognize the legacy and work of PTA founders.
2/17	Presidents Day	Originally established to honor of George Washington, the first president of the United States, now popularly viewed as a day to celebrate all US presidents
2/19	Day of Remembrance: Japanese incarceration	Remember the internment of Japanese Americans during WWII.
2/20	World Day of Social Justice	Recognize the efforts to achieve fair outcomes for all through social justice.
2/22	George Washington's Birthday	One of the Founding Fathers and the First President of the U.S.
2/25-2/26	Maha Shivaratri	Hindu festival celebrating God Shiva.
2/25-2/28	Ayyám-i-Há or Intercalary Days	Bahá'í period of celebration devoted to charity, gift-giving and festivities prior to the annual period of fasting.
2/28-3/30	Ramadan (begins at sundown 2/28)	Islamic holy month observed by fasting.
2/28	Tibetan New Year	Losar is a 15-day celebration with the main celebration on the first three days
2/28	National Science Day	Commemorate the discovery of Raman Effect.

Contacts

Equity and Family Engagement Department



[Links to bios](#)

The Equity and Family Engagement Department is here to serve families and schools throughout the district. Below you'll find our roles and individual email addresses. Please reach out if we can be of assistance.

Pablo Ortega, Director portega@lwsd.org

Xandra Tate Peter, Equity and Strategic Engagement Manager xpeter@lwsd.org

Blanca Rivas Lefort, McKinney-Vento and Foster Care Liaison brivaslefort@lwsd.org

Damaly Soy, Equity Specialist dsoy@lwsd.org

Catherine Cruz, Family Engagement & Community Outreach Coordinator catcruz@lwsd.org

Na'eemah Webb, Family Engagement & Community Outreach Coordinator nawebb@lwsd.org

Adanna Abakporo, Equity & Family Engagement Facilitator, Eastlake aabakporo@lwsd.org

Beverly Dosono, Equity & Family Engagement Facilitator, Juanita bdosono@lwsd.org

Sergio Barrera-Batista, Equity & Family Engagement Facilitator, Redmond sbarrerabatista@lwsd.org

Susan Custer, Equity & Family Engagement Facilitator, Lake Washington scuster@lwsd.org

Lauren Nabahe, Eastside Native American Education Program Coordinator lnabahe@lwsd.org

Virginia Ramirez, Language Access Coordinator vramirezromero@lwsd.org

The department also has four Cultural and Language Liaisons to support LWSD families.

Isabelly Benites, Brazilian Portuguese-speaking, c-ibenites@lwsd.org

Terri Gatts Dayton, c-tdayton@lwsd.org

Diana Williams, c-dwilliams@lwsd.org

Jenni Martinez Lorenzo, Spanish-speaking, c-jmartinezlorenzo@lwsd.org
