

THE OFFICE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS HIGH SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

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RACE AND EQUITY IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

What our own local schools are doing to ensure support for our students of color

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING - VIRTUALLY

Implementing strategies that work to welcome students into your classrooms - everyday

WELCOME BACK... VIRTUALLY AND OTHERWISE

By Justyna P. King

"This is the weirdest first day back ... ever." – said teachers all over Instagram.

Indeed, it is. We have 11 Catholic high schools in the Seattle Archdiocese, and it seems as though every campus is welcoming back their students, faculty and staff a little differently. The only folks who may feel weirder than returning teachers to a school? **New teachers.** Who starts a new job, mid-pandemic?? (Asks the crazy newest member to the Office of Catholic Schools team).

I agreed to join the Office of Catholic Schools in the early Spring, before COVID

reality hit and before we knew what schools were going to look like this Fall. And when I officially started July 1st with some semblance of reality, I was so impressed by the principals and educators in our Catholic schools, I knew this was going to be an amazing opportunity to work amongst the best in education.

It is going to be a weird year – and it will take grace, patience, and one heck of a sense of humor to get through it. The OCS is here for you outside of your school building as a resource. We look forward to continued partnership with our high school leaders and staff for the 2020-2021 school year.

MEET YOUR OTHER HIGH SCHOOLS

Networking with other teachers begins with knowing about other schools

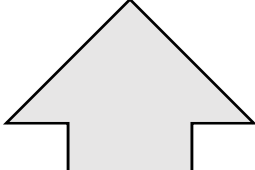


DID YOU KNOW?

Your Catholic School principals (and some presidents!) Have engaged in summer-long professional development around Equity and Race – including participating in a 5-week critical study of Catholic Equity work. Led by principal Matt DeBoer (St. Therese School – Seattle) we had over 30 principals meet weekly to discuss racism, cultural competency, and the Catholic Church. Utilizing the *Courageous Conversations* protocol for discussion and reflection, school leaders were able to delve deep into important conversations. Please ask your principal about their commitment to Equity work and how you can support your school's decision-making protocols in ensuring decisions are made with an Equity lens.

RACE AND EQUITY IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Important Work Being Done in our Catholic High Schools



Want to learn more about the *Courageous Conversations* protocol? Check out Glenn Singleton's *Courageous Conversations about Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools*. 2nd Ed. (2016)

We have a lot of work to do. There are competing areas of focus for schools, including virtual teaching strategies, social emotional relationship building, and creating meaningful and data-based assessments. But none of these initiatives can be equitable and meaningful to all students when covert and institutional racism plague our communities. Catholic institutions have a higher calling to ensure that we uphold the dignity of all students and families – and to that end, many of our high schools are intentionally working towards bringing culturally competent and anti-racist initiatives onto campus.

We still have a lot of work to do – but here are some areas of hope from the work upon which our Seattle area Catholic schools have been embarking:



ARCHBISHOP ETIENNE'S RESPONSE TO RACIAL VIOLENCE

After the murder of George Floyd, Archbishop Etienne responded with a letter to the Catholic community titled "A Call to Address Racism in our Hearts and Community." ----->

In his letter, the Archbishop points out that there is a "deep seated connection between institutional racism and the continued erosion of the sanctity of life." It begs the question – how have we, as Catholics, been defining our "pro-life" stance? What can we learn from this statement as we call on our communities to respect, cherish and support our most vulnerable?

Race and human dignity must be topics of discussion within all of our classrooms – utilizing the words of our own Archbishop are a good starting point in these discussions.

If you would like to learn more about Archbishop Etienne or to read all of his statements on racism and the Catholic Church,, follow his blog at <https://www.archbishopetienne.com>



A Call to Address Racism in our Hearts and Community

The Catholic bishops of the United States recently issued a pastoral letter against racism entitled *Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love*. In this instruction, we call for a conversion of hearts, minds and institutions to address the evils of racism that still exist in our country and communities. As we wrote in the letter:

Racism occurs because a person ignores the fundamental truth that, because all humans share a common origin, they are all brothers and sisters, all equally made in the image of God. When this truth is ignored, the consequence is prejudice and fear of the other, and—all too often—hatred.

The killing of George Floyd in Minnesota on Monday, May 25, was very traumatic and appalling. I wish to acknowledge the anger, pain and sadness this and other encounters between police officers and black men evoke not only in Minnesota, but throughout the country and in our own faith family as well.

These deaths are tragic, and they expose a symptomatic and deep-seated connection between institutional racism and the continued erosion of the sanctity of life. If we do not respond appropriately as a society, we will be tacitly acquiescing to the ongoing killing of unarmed black men.

The senseless taking of life defies the fundamental principles of justice, every notion of dignity and the fact that all of our lives are connected. As human beings, we are responsible for each other.

As Seattle Police Chief Carmen Best said in her May 27 statement to the SPD, "policing is an honorable profession filled with honorable public servants, committed to protecting life and serving the community." Chief Best also told her officers that if they see a coworker doing something that is unsafe, out of policy, unacceptable and illegal, they need to act, and that if someone's life is unnecessarily in danger, it is their responsibility to intervene.

As Catholics, we are called to the same standards of behavior. We cannot stand by and not respond to incidents of racism and inhuman treatment of our black brothers and sisters, or anyone else.

Whether citizens or officers of the law, we are all part of a community that is responsible to care for each other. Our time-honored Catholic social teaching about the common good demands no less of any of us.

The fact that we were created in the image of God teaches us that each person is a living expression of God who must be respected and preserved and never dishonored. Let us continue to pray and work together for the personal and societal conversions necessary to address the evils of racism.

Some Examples of Equity Work in Our Local Catholic High Schools

Bellarmino High School:

Developed an Equity Team in 2017
Created a Justice Summit on Race
Educated community on the characteristics of "constructive dialogue"
One Race Bellarmino - student group to engage students in equity dialogue

Seattle Prep:

Equity and Inclusion Director - Deino Scott
2020 Staff training on cultural competence
Ignatian Solidarity Network 21 Day Equity Challenge
Faculty Book study of *So You Want to Talk About Race?*
Author Ijeoma Oluo is giving a virtual presentation at Prep in September

There are many more initiatives at
our other Catholic high schools!
What is your school doing???

Eastside Catholic:

Affinity groups for students, faculty and parents
Equity and Social Action Committee and Parent Equity Social Action Committee
In 2020 Hired a Director of Equity and Social Action:
Leslie Harris-Johnston
Courageous Conversations about Race for Faculty/Staff
Awarded the 2020 Fulcrum Building Diversity and Inclusion Grant

Archbishop Murphy:

Change Group for students of color and allies
Worked with the Anti-defamation League - *No Place for Hate Initiative*
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Staff team - PD for the rest of the staff
Worked with Kisha Palmer (Director of Institute for Inclusive Leadership) - coaching/planning

Tips for Talking With Students About Race

Author/researcher Linda K. Wertheimer synthesizes insights from scholars and teachers on teaching about racism in secondary schools and included the following:

Things to do:

- Before teaching about race, explore and recognize your own racial and ethnic identity.
- Cast a wide net to develop instructional materials, including resources from Facing History and Ourselves, Colorful Pages (geared to elementary schools), and university schools of education.
- Help foster a school-wide culture that supports conversations about race and racism.
- Create a classroom community where students feel comfortable having difficult conversations.
- Set parameters for conversations on race, including a reminder that students should speak only for themselves and not for their entire race or ethnicity.

Things not to do:

- Don't share personal opinions. Focus instead on guiding students, using history and facts, to reach their own conclusions about what constitutes racism.
- Don't use simulations, such as slave auctions, as a teaching tool. They can be traumatic for students of color.
- Don't ask students of color to share their experiences with racism unless they choose to do so.
- Don't be afraid to make mistakes, but be sure to own them if they happen.
- Don't think of race and racism as a topic only for history classes. It can be taught as a part of literature, science, and other subjects.

THE DANGERS OF IGNORING RACE

According to author Zach Stafford, "race is such an ingrained social construct that even color blind people can 'see' it. To pretend it doesn't exist to you erases the experiences of black people."

It is crucial that educators continue to engage in anti-racist work. To that end, there are several books that are accessible and can help frame discussions with colleagues and families about race/racism and anti-racism. These are a few starting points:

So You Want To Talk About Race? (I. Oluo)

White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism. (R. DiAngelo)

Culturally Responsive Classroom Leadership. (M. Khalifa)

Courageous Conversations About Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools. (G. Singleton)

How to Be An Anti-Racist. (I. Kendi)



SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

The Committee for Children defines Social-Emotional Learning as “the process of developing the self-awareness, self-control, and interpersonal skills that are vital for school, work, and life success.” Beyond relationship building, SEL also works in tandem with culturally responsive teaching, and exclusionary discipline reform by acknowledging, celebrating and reinforcing diverse backgrounds of students.

SEL should be the focus of the beginning of the school year, and practiced, integrated, and celebrated throughout the entire 2020-21 school year.



Extensive research shows a correlation between the skills taught in SEL programs and academic achievement, positive behavior, and healthier life choices.”

-Committee for Children, global non-profit

Need some help with resources for SEL? Reach out to Sandy Barton Smith or Kelly Surapaneni at the OCS for links to trainings, webinars, and SEL PD!

sandra.smith@seattlearch.org

kelly.surapaneni@seattlearch.org

Also, check out our website with PD opportunities:

<http://mycatholicschool.org>

FOUR TIPS FOR VIRTUAL RELATIONSHIP BUILDING:

01

LEARN NAMES. Within the first week of school, learn preferred names, pronouns, and correct **pronunciations.**

03

PLAY. Take time to get to know students by playing ice-breakers, virtual scavenger hunts, or chatting in break out rooms.

02

GET INTEL. Reach out to families to better understand your new students backgrounds, strengths, fears, and loves.

04

CREATE SAFE SPACES. Spaces to learn, spaces to ask questions, spaces to make mistakes. Be welcoming – what is in your virtual background?

DID YOU KNOW?

The OCS is working on providing teachers and principals opportunities to tune into bite-size PDs on topics such as SEL, Equity, and virtual teaching strategies. Join us for our **Lunch and Learns** (select Tuesdays, 12-1pm) where professionals and colleagues support each other in 30 – 60 minute lunch sized PD on ZOOM. Our first ever Lunch and Learn on August 25th focused on Virtual Relationship Building and yielded over 160 teacher participants. All PDs are recorded and can be found on <http://mycatholicschool.org> We hope to see you at our next Lunch and Learn, currently scheduled for 09/22 at 12pm. Registration details to come!

2020-2021: A Focus on High School Collaboration

One goal for this school year is to bring our high schools together and provide (virtual) space for teacher collaboration. We have a mechanism to do this at the PreK-8th grade level with the G.R.A.C.E. program but we do not have a similar PLC-model program for secondary schools.

We currently have 11 high schools in 8 regional areas (see chart below) and on our annual Office of Catholic Schools curriculum day, principals and school leaders at the high school level will partner with us to provide high school teachers the opportunity to network and get together in content teams to meet, discuss, and share what has been working this year, and what has not.

Please save the date for our **Archdiocesan Regional Curriculum Day on March 12, 2021** where we hope to have a collaboration of content-like teams to spend some time learning from each other. Until then, if you are interested in helping plan a Professional Learning Community (PLC) program for high school teachers, email Justyna King at justyna.king@seattlearch.org. I am looking for leaders in all high school academic areas.

In the meantime, keep your ears open for opportunities to meet with content-alike teachers and collaborate this Fall.

▲ =Category II (Private) Schools

EASTSIDE

▲ Eastside Catholic HS	Sammamish	Ryan Aiello	raiello@eastsidecatholic.org
▲ Forest Ridge	Bellevue	Kathi Hand	khand@forestridge.org

NORTHERN

▲ Archbishop Murphy	Everett	Alicia Mitchell	amitchell@am-hs.org
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NORTH SEATTLE

Bishop Blanchet	Seattle	Sam Procopio	sprocopio@bishopblanchet.org
▲ Seattle Prep	Seattle	Dr. Erin Luby	eluby@seaprep.org

PIERCE

Bellarmino Prep	Tacoma	Cindy Davis	davisc@bellarmineprep.org
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SOUTH SEATTLE

▲ Holy Names	Seattle	Liz Swift	eswift@holynames-sea.org
O'Dea	Seattle	Jim Walker	jdwalker@odea.org

SOUTH KING

Kennedy Catholic	Burien	Matthew Mohs	mohsm@kennedyhs.org
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SOUTHERN

Seton Catholic	Vancouver	Robert Rusk	rrusk@setonhigh.org
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SOUTH SOUND

John Paul II	Lacey	Therese Allin	tallin@popejp2hseagles.org
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In Closing ...

All great classes, meetings, and get-togethers end with an inspirational prayer. The most poignant prayers are typically those which can speak to our current situation. Read, and re-read, meditate and reflect upon the following words:

Lord help me
to remember
that nothing
is going to happen
to me today
that You and I
together can't handle.
Amen.



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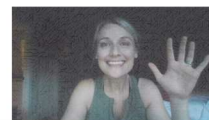
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