

THE OFFICE FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS HIGH SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NO 5 | JANUARY 2021



2021
HAPPY NEW YEAR

FINALLY – 2021.

Although we still do not know exactly what 2021 will bring, it could not possibly be less predictable and pandemic-y than 2020... right?

In that spirit, we continue to move forward and proceed with planning for the best case scenario – schools reopening safely and students returning to class.

Right now, we have over a dozen schools (most K-8) who are operating full speed ahead. Teachers have been teaching in-person since last Fall, and many high school principals, learning from the best practices of our opened schools, are excited to reopen our high school hallways once again. Masked, of course. ☺

The OCS is a resource for teachers and school leaders as your schools decide what is best and appropriate for your community. Always feel free to reach out to any of us on the team.

In this issue of the high school newsletter, I was hoping to provide you with some inspiration for continuing the work that you are doing in social-emotional learning, providing you with four amazing recommendations for reading, and hoping that you'll be crazy enough to take on more work in the form of PD, leadership opportunities, and of course, self-care.

Happy 2021. – JPK

BRINGING IN THE NEW YEAR

A new year, a new you.
Or you can just go ahead
and recycle your
resolutions from 2020.

TAKING CARE OF STUDENTS

Keeping on track with
social emotional learning
opportunities – even
during this pandemic

TAKING CARE OF YO' SELF

Ok enough about
students. Seriously, how do
we make it for the rest of
2021?

2021 – the Year of Self Care

In a year that seems to have started at least 14 months ago, it is more important than ever that teachers continue to take care of themselves. The Christmas break was a nice respite from the realities of virtual teaching – but now it's time to get into gear again.

Your local Catholic HS teachers can be a great resource for support, friendship and collaboration. Reach out to me if you'd like to get more information about how to meet other subject-alike HS teachers in our archdiocese!



People who love themselves come across as very loving, generous, and kind; they express their self-confidence through humility, forgiveness, and inclusiveness.” – Sanya Roman



UPDATE: Equity is a Sign of Love

Since July 2020, our team at the Office for Catholic Schools has been committed to Diversity and Equity work to the best extent that we are capable – we are currently reading *So You Want To Talk About Race* by Ijeoma Oluo, we are partnering with the Fulcrum Foundation to provide resources for schools embarking on their own equity journeys, and most recently, we have supported the Becraft Foundation, which works primarily to encourage Black students to participate in Catholic education.

In August of 2020, Fulcrum Foundation launched Becraft Scholars, a holistic equity program designed to make Catholic schools more accessible and welcoming for all children, especially Black families. The program director is responsible for growing and operating Becraft Scholars, cultivating relationships with families and students, and collaborating with school principals, archdiocesan/Fulcrum leadership, and outside partnerships. We are currently interviewing several incredible candidates for the program director position and the OCS is excited to continue working with Fulcrum and Becraft to collaborate on this important work.

If you have an interest in promoting equity work on a macro-scale through working in a professional learning community with us at the OCS level, please reach out to me! We need passionate and supportive educators with ideas on how we can continue this work and promote equity across all of our 72 Catholic schools. Email justyna.king@seattlsearch.org anytime!

KEEPING SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING ON TRACK DURING THE PANDEMIC

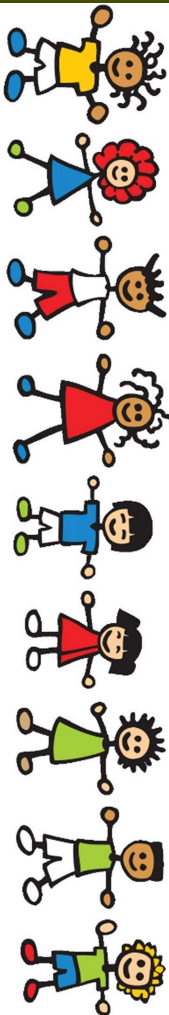
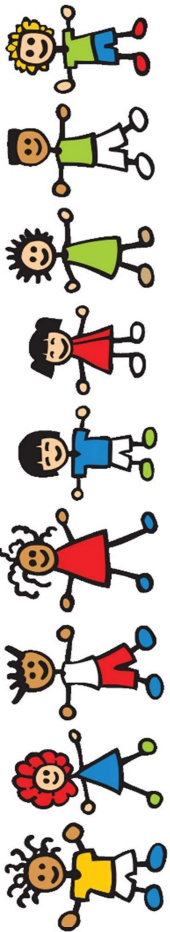
"With this school year like no other in full swing – and no guarantee of when the pandemic will abate – it is our responsibility to make sure that the classrooms of 2020 and beyond aren't simply new theaters in which to restage the same old inequities," say Eve Colavito and Kalila Hoggard (DREAM school network) in this article in *Education Week*. "Although many educators are physically farther from our students, our lens into their daily lives and the challenges they face has never been clearer."

Colavito and Hoggard's immediate concern is that policing student behavior is sometimes masquerading as social-emotional learning. They agree with the goals of SEL – teaching students to understand and respond to their own emotions and those of the people around them, use their voices, and exercise agency. "But when SEL is pitched to schools as a trendy way to regulate student behavior," they say, "we're missing the point... using it to regulate rather than empower." No-excuses discipline policies can focus on compliance, order for order's sake, and sometimes dole out overly harsh consequences. Struggling to achieve some semblance of "normal school" during the pandemic, some teachers are demanding that computer cameras be turned on and insisting on restrictive dress codes in students' bedrooms.

Now more than ever, say Colavito and Hoggard, it's important to think about SEL with an equity lens, asking what kinds of support families need and how students' social and emotional health can be nourished. In their New York City charter schools, they are striving to:

- Recognize that students won't succeed in school until they are fed, sheltered, and safe – and also known, seen, and loved.
- Create classroom norms that every student contributes and commits to;
- Create a space where children establish their own vision of success;
- Get students to turn on their cameras because they feel safe and comfortable;
- Extend the same options and practices to all students, no matter what they look like and how they learn;
- Develop "critical thinkers and lifelong learners who leave school ready to live in the world, to be a citizen, and to do equity work of their own."

"When Social-Emotional Learning Is Misused" by Eve Colavito and Kalila Hoggard in *Education Week*, December 9, 2020 (Vol. 40, #16, p. 20); the authors can be reached at ecolavito@wearedream.org and khoggard@wearedream.org.



Four Great Reads for Educator Book Clubs

01

Talking to Strangers by Malcolm Gladwell discusses the impossibility of truly understanding a stranger. He touches on Hitler, Bernie Madoff, and Sandra Bland. The sheer range of stories will keep readers engaged.

03

We Can't Talk About that at Work! By Mary-Frances Winters. Race, religion, politics – all of the difficult topics we were taught not to broach in mixed company – she provides great ideas for why we must be prepared to speak out.

02

So You Want to Talk about Race? by Ijeoma Oluo is one of the most accessible reads for groups of educators who may be on different parts of their anti-racist journey.

04

Rising Strong by Brené Brown. A self-help book that asks you to be authentic and vulnerable – traits that all leaders in education could use more of. A book laden with plan-altering questions and considerations.

Looking for unparalleled Professional Development? Join an Accreditation Team!

The majority of our Catholic schools participate in WCEA (Western Catholic Education Association) protocol for their accreditation needs. Our elementary schools and our high schools are always looking for educators to participate in a 3-day onsite (or in this day and age, virtual) school visit – which includes reading through the accreditation school's self-study, participating in a collaborative effort often led by superintendents or school leaders outside of our Seattle Archdiocese, and recommending improvement efforts for that school. Most participants who complete accreditation cycles volunteer over and over again to participate – it is incredible professional development and a great way to meet other educators in our diocese! If you are interested in participating for 2021-2022, please let your principal know, or email Janeal Grosinger, at janeal.grosinger@seattlearch.org and she will be happy to put you on the list!

All participants are eligible for clock hours for their time (and remember – you must apply for clock hours ahead of time).

Thank you for your interest and consideration!

Three Suggested Resolutions for those Extra Educators

1. **Mind-Body Health** – whether it is training for a marathon or simply incorporating stretching into your daily routine, make a pact with yourself to take extra care of your body ... at least through January.

2. **Adult Collaboration** – without daily interactions in a place of work, many of us go throughout the whole day interacting only with adolescents via ZOOM. Make a point to schedule a 15 minute collaboration session with a different colleague each week. (Hint: it does not need to be work-related).

3. **Practice Gratitude** – ok, harder this year than most, but studies have shown that an attitude of gratitude actually helps our brain and heart. Even if it is just thanks for making it through another lesson, a win is a win.

For more hilarious tips on resolutions for teachers, visit: [10 New Year's Resolutions for Teachers - WeAreTeachers](#)



Looking to take on a Principal or School Leadership Role? No? Keep Reading Anyway!

GETTING THE RIGHT PEOPLE TO STEP UP FOR LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

In a *Harvard Business Review* article, Chen Zhang (Tsinghua University), Jennifer Nahrgang (University of Iowa), and Susan Ashford and Scott DeRue (University of Michigan) say most organizations "desperately need" skilled leaders. Many people claim to be interested in a leadership role, but those with potential often fail to apply when opportunities open up, even holding back from taking "leaderly" actions in team meetings. Why? Zhang, Nahrgang, Ashford, and DeRue studied hundreds of leaders and potential leaders and a number of organizations, and have identified three perceived risks:

- *Relationships* – Going for a leadership role might disrupt positive relationships with colleagues, stir up resentment, ruin friendships, and lead to negative talk behind their backs. This fear is most pronounced in organizations where disagreements get nasty, becoming entangled with personality conflicts involving values, styles, and personalities.

- *Self-image* – "Despite the fact that both organizations and employees generally claim to admire leadership," say the authors, "people worry that actually engaging in leadership acts might make them look bad in the eyes of their peers." Becoming a leader might result in colleagues thinking they are a know-it-all or too aggressive.

- *Blame* – Employees with leadership potential might worry that if they take on a major responsibility and things go wrong, they will be blamed, alienating important mentors and jeopardizing future opportunities. "People are more risk-averse when major career consequences are at stake," say the authors.

["Why Capable People Are Reluctant to Lead"](#) by Chen Zhang, Jennifer Nahrgang, Susan Ashford, and Scott DeRue in *Harvard Business Review*, December 17, 2020

At the Office for Catholic Schools, **we need you more than ever right now** – we are looking at many leadership positions (elementary school principalships, secondary support roles, etc.) for 2021-22, and we would love to talk with you if you have an inkling, but maybe embody some of the hesitations outlined above. Our director of leadership development, **Kelly Surapaneni** focuses on recruiting, training, and retaining teachers and principals with excellent leadership skills. She is deeply involved in leadership opportunities with seven partner universities, including the University of Portland's Pacific Alliance for Catholic Education Program. If you have any questions about the many, many opportunities for leadership within our Seattle Archdiocese, Kelly is your point person. Also, if you are interested in pursuing a degree in Educational Leadership, check out this link: [OCS Educational Leadership Partners & Leadership Development \[mycatholicsschool.org\]](#). We have a new partner, The University of San Francisco. Also on the webpage is information regarding the Fulcrum Educational Leadership Grant application.



Need more info?? Contact: Kelly Surapaneni (she's super nice)
ksurapaneni@fulcrumfoundation.org

And in the End ...

As with most things in life, there are people who say things much better than I can put into words, so I leave you this month with a brilliant quote from one of my favorite writers:

"I do not understand the mystery of grace -- only that it meets us where we are and does not leave us where it found us."

- Anne Lamott

(seriously – check her out if you have not discovered her yet).

Contact me anytime –
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