

EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE IN SPS

Dr. Jessica Boston Davis - Director for Equity and Excellence



Celebrate Latinx Heritage Month

Latin America Youth Center Summer 2021 Mural

Welcome Back!

Welcome back! This year is beginning like no other: We are thrilled to be fully back in person, albeit socially-distanced and wearing masks, with some students seeing their schools for the very first time. And at the same time, the pandemic continues to shift the way we do things from the way we engage with one another in the classroom, to the way we eat lunch, to the way we meet with one another. We as a district continue to adapt because we are a resilient community dedicated to our students. In the midst of all the shifts, let us remember to build a strong foundation with our students to create an enriching, uplifting environment where all students, in their whole intersectional identities, can thrive.

In the beginning of the year, we build strong foundations by doing the following:

- Get to know your students. Build community by learning about them. [Learn your students' pronouns.](#)
- Learn how to say your students' names. [Pronounce them correctly.](#) Only use a nickname if the student shares that preferred name with you.
- Begin with reflection. We do not have to return to ["school as usual."](#) Consider what went well last year, and what you might want to do differently.
- [Take the time to care for yourself.](#) These times are incredibly stressful. Please do what you have to do to take care of yourself. Counseling for staff, PD opportunities, and resources are available.



WHAT'S ON THE CALENDAR?

- 9/15 - 10/15 - Latinx Heritage Month
- 9/16 - Yom Kippur
- 10/1 - 10/31 - LGBTQ History Month
- 10/11 - Coming Out Day
- 10/11 - Indigenous Peoples Day
- 11/1 - 11/30 National American Indian Heritage Month
- 11/4 - Diwali

The Jewish month of Tishrei began on 9/6 with Rosh Hashanah. [Click here to learn more about the Jewish High Holidays.](#)

[Link to ADL Calendar for More](#)

Beginning of the Year Resources:

Articles

- [Honor Their Names by Linda Christensen](#)
- [What If We...Don't Return to School as Usual](#)
- [Start the School Year Right!](#)

Videos

- [It's My Name! Say it Right.](#)

Other Resources

- [Employee Assistance Program](#) which offers counseling, coaching, and other online resources such as the mental health toolkit and family resources

Code: City of Somerville

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Latinx Heritage Month

From 9/15 - 10/15, we observe Latinx Heritage Month as a way to honor and celebrate the diversity, cultures, histories, and contributions of the Latinx community.

Please see this additional description written by Jill Ceballos, Equity Specialist from East Somerville Community School:

Latinx vs. Hispanic

Sometimes these terms are used interchangeably. However, Hispanic refers to any Spanish-speaking culture, so it includes Spain along with Spanish-speaking Latin American countries. Latinx (or Latine/a/o) refers to Latin American countries, including both Spanish and non-Spanish speaking nations in the Caribbean, Central America, South America, and North America. This means our Haitian and Brazilian students are Latinx!

It is important to distinguish between these two terms because their histories are very different. Latin American countries have Indigenous roots and were colonized, while Spain (a Hispanic country) colonized them.

Diversity Within the Latinx Community

It is important to remember that the Latinx community is incredibly diverse in race, gender identities, language, and religion. I encourage you to be thoughtful about this as you choose books and activities to share with students, since there is not "one way" to be Latinx. Also, it is essential to amplify Black Latinx, Asian Latinx, and Indigenous experiences, as they are often not as represented in our celebration of Latinx Heritage month, but are still very much Latinx.

This is a great reminder that race, ethnicity, and identity often intersect for many people, so while these months are a great opportunity to celebrate different cultures, it is crucial that representation for all identities is considered all year long!

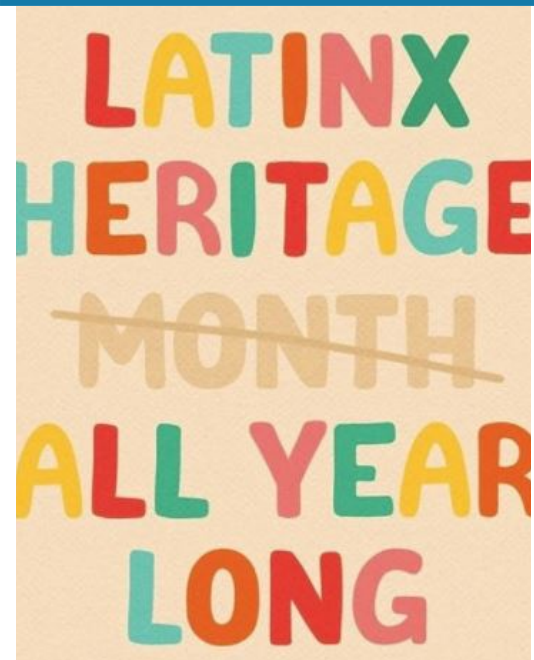
Indigenous Peoples' Day

Hispanic/Latinx Heritage month transitions into Indigenous Peoples' Day. Consider setting the foundation now and work with students on recognizing the Indigenous roots of Latin America. Highlight the work Indigenous people have done and continue to do to fight for their language and culture against colonization. There is also a growing movement of Latinx who are working to reclaim their Indigenous roots.



Resources (compiled by Jill Ceballos)

- [Resources in Spanish](#)- by Erick Pagan, ESCS
- [ABC's Corazón de America](#) special which had the following segments:
 - Colorism in the Latin American community
 - A School Offers Indigenous Language Preservation
 - Dolores Huerta Reflects on Activism and Next Generation's Fight
- [Hispanic Heritage Month Slidedeck/Lesson](#)- by Dayshawn Simmons, Healey School
- [Book List](#)- This list has lesser known books that are great for K-8 students and highlight Black and Indigenous Latinx experiences

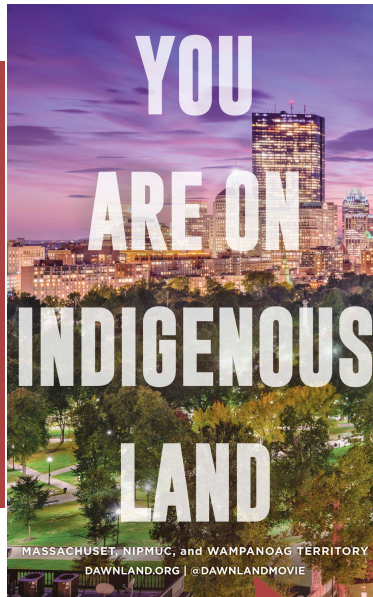


DEPARTMENT OF EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Indigenous Peoples' Day

On Monday, October 11, we observe Indigenous Peoples' Day. On this day we celebrate and honor the cultures and resilience of Indigenous communities. There are several ways all staff can continue to learn about Indigenous Peoples' Day this year.



Resources:

- [2021 Indigenous Peoples' Day Curriculum Teach-In - Saturday - 9/25](#) (this date has passed but you can access resources)
- [Watch Dear Georgia and Dawnland co-presented by Peabody Essex Museum, Hopelink, and Upstander Project - Monday 10/11](#)
- [Watch First Light](#) a 13 minute documentary for free
- [Learn About Indigenous Land Acknowledgements](#)

SPS Professional Development centering Indigenous Perspectives (Sign up in your Frontline account)

Open to all educators

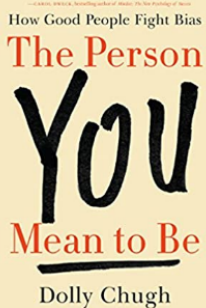
- Anti-Racism: An Indigenous Perspective; Instructor: Claudia A. Fox Tree - 10/7, 10/21, 12/2 from 3:00 - 5:00pm
- Native Voices in Children's Literature; Instructor: Dr. Debbie Reese - 10/14, 1/20 from 3:00 - 4:30pm

Special thank you to **Emma Mrozicki** and **Monica Revert** for sharing names and resources to bring these professional development opportunities to SPS

Newsletter Links and Resources

- [Mindful of Equity: Practices That Help Students Control Their Impulses Can Also Mask Systemic Failures](#)
- [Celebrate Intersectional LGBTQ History This Month!](#) [October is LGBTQ+ History Month]
- [The NEA Foundation Envision Equity Grant](#) [Shared by Caitlin Kelly]
- [Far East Deep South First Class Initiative](#) to incorporate Asian American History in social studies classrooms.
- [Dr. Hardin Coleman's Caring, Character, and Community Podcast](#) which focuses on how leaders integrate the ethic of caring, their own and others' character development, and a commitment to serving the needs of others to guide and inform their leadership in times of crisis. [Shared by Supt. Skipper]
- [Teaching Africa Teacher Certificate Program](#)

What Jess is Reading



[The Person You Mean to Be](#)
by Dolly Chugh

Check out the article that Jess wrote in collaboration with other DEI directors: [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Education Should Be Included In Public Schools](#)



Quote of the Quarter:

“Educators need to know what happens in the world of the children with whom they work. They need to know the universe of their dreams, the language with which they skillfully defend themselves from the aggressiveness of their world, what they know independently of the school, and how they know it.”

-Paulo Freire