



EQUITY IS...

Monthly Newsletter of the SDP Equity Coalition

EQUITY COALITION UPDATES

Big things are happening with the Equity Coalition for the 2021-2022 school year.

On October 27th nearly 100 people attended the Equity Coalition Open House to hear more about the active projects for the 2021-2022 school year. These projects include the opportunity to interact with families, students, and external partners as well as district staff in a variety of ways. If you have a passion for event planning, podcast production, and/or building relationships, there is a project where your skills would serve as a valuable contribution to redesigning a more equitable school district. You can see list of our current project below.

Equity Coalition Project Work Teams



Join Us!

Please see below a list of active projects - you can sign up for a project work team by clicking the project name hyperlink

[Affinity Groups](#)

Do you desire to cultivate and facilitate brave spaces for individuals who share a particular identity? This working team is for you.

[Equity Audit](#)

Do you enjoy collecting and analyzing data to identifying areas of equity/inequity in our organization? This working team is for you.

["Equity Is" Podcast](#)

Are you inspired by creating opportunities for people to share their stories, experiences, and expertise? Join this working team.

[External Partners](#)

Would you like to engage with community partners through conversations and activism? Join this working team.

[Learning Pathways](#)

Does supporting with designing and facilitation of equity professional learning opportunities for families and community members inspire you? Join the learning pathways working team.

[Policy Review Cycle](#)

Are you interested in reviewing and providing feedback on Board Policies through an equity lens? The policy review cycle working team is for you.

[Social Justice Summit](#)

Do you enjoying convening diverse groups of people and planning opportunities for shared learning? Join the Social Justice Summit working team.

If you missed our Open House and would like more information about which working team might be right for you, please email Michelle Gainer: mgolobish@philasd.org

CULTURAL AWARENESS & CELEBRATIONS FOR NOVEMBER

NOVEMBER RECOGNIZES NATIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN, AMERICAN INDIAN, AND ALASKAN NATIVE HERITAGE MONTH AS WELL AS MOVEMBER WHICH RECOGNIZES MEN'S HEALTH ISSUES SUCH AS PROSTATE CANCER

Nov 4: Diwali (Hindu) - Diwali is a festival of lights and one of the major festivals celebrated by Hindus, Jains, Sikhs and some Buddhists, notably Newar Buddhists. The festival usually lasts five days and is celebrated during the Hindu lunisolar month Kartika

Nov 6: Birth of the Bab (Baha'i) - The Báb, born Sayyed 'Alí Muhammad Shírází was the founder of Bábism, and one of the central figures of the Bahá'í Faith. The Báb was a merchant from Shiraz in Qajar Iran who, in 1844 at the age of 25, claimed to be a messenger of God.

Nov 7: Birth of Baha'u'llah (Baha'i) - The Birth of Bahá'u'lláh is one of nine holy days in the Bahá'í calendar that is celebrated by adherents of the Bahá'í Faith and during which work is suspended. The holy day celebrates the birth of Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í Faith.

Nov 9: World Freedom Day - World Freedom Day is a United States federal observance declared by then-President George W. Bush to commemorate the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of communist rule in Central and Eastern Europe. It started in 2001 and is celebrated on November 9.

Nov 11: Veterans Day - Veterans Day is a federal holiday in the United States observed annually on November 11, for honoring military veterans, who are people who have served in the United States Armed Forces.

Nov 20: Transgender Day of Remembrance - The Transgender Day of Remembrance, also known as the International Transgender Day of Remembrance, has been observed annually on November 20 as a day to memorialize those who have been murdered as a result of transphobia. It is a day to draw attention to the continued violence endured by transgender people.

Nov 24: Day of the Covenant (Baha'i) - The Day of the Covenant is the day when Bahá'ís celebrate the appointment of 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the Centre of Baha'u'llah's Covenant. It occurs yearly on the 4th day of Speech which coincides with either November 25 or 26 depending on when Naw Ruz falls on that year.

Nov 25: Thanksgiving - Thanksgiving is a national holiday celebrated on various dates in the United States, Canada, Grenada, Saint Lucia, and Liberia. It began as a day of giving thanks and sacrifice for the blessing of the harvest and of the preceding year. Similarly named festival holidays occur in Germany and Japan.

Nov 27: Ascension of Abdu'l-Baha (Baha'i) - The Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá is a holy day that commemorates the death of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. It is observed on 6 Qawl (27 or 28 November). Work is not suspended on this day as it is on some holy days. The typical observance consists of devotional readings and is held at 1:00 AM, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá passed away about 1:00 AM on 28 November, 1921.

Nov 28: Hanukkah Begins (Jewish) - Hanukkah is a Jewish festival commemorating the recovery of Jerusalem and subsequent rededication of the Second Temple at the beginning of the Maccabean revolt against the Seleucid Empire in the 2nd century BCE. It is also known as the Festival of Lights.

[CLICK HERE](#) for academic resources to help you celebrate Native American Heritage Month

As a part of the district's commitment to ensuring the our instructional resources are Culturally and Linguistically Inclusive these resources have been developed in collaboration with the Office of Academic Supports.



Employee Spotlight

Joe Antonio

In honor of Filipino American Heritage Month the Equity Coalition is spotlighting Joe Antonio from the Office of the Superintendent. Joe has served the School District of Philadelphia for nearly 15 years and currently serves as the School Board President for the Wissahickon School District. He grew up in LA before moving to Philadelphia to attend Penn for undergrad.

Describe growing up as a Filipino American.

Even though I check "Asian/ Pacific Islander" on a census, I've always felt more Filipino than Asian per se. Growing up in L.A. which has so many different Asian groups, I could see many differences between our cultures. In fact, I actually felt more affinity toward Mexican and Hispanic cultures. When I was older, I learned that Spain colonized the Philippines back in the 1500's and, as a result, there is so much Spanish influence in Filipino culture today in terms of language, religion, and customs. Even my last name "Antonio" has Spanish roots.

Why education? What drew you to this field?

As a former management consultant, I've always enjoyed tackling complex process and organizational problems. But, oftentimes, I was doing it for private sector companies whose core missions were not particularly meaningful to me. A consulting project with D.C. Public Schools in 2002 opened my eyes to the fact that urban school districts are akin to Fortune 500 companies in size and scope. A key difference is that school districts are engaged in what I firmly believe is a noble cause and most people in the field are there because they believe in that cause. The opportunity to apply my skills and strengths in service to a noble cause alongside other mission-driven people led me to the field and keeps me inspired to stay.

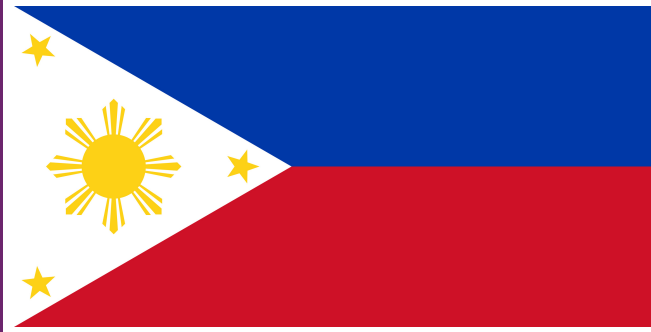
What inspires you about working for the School District of Philadelphia?

SDP is a mission-driven organization filled with dedicated and talented people which is inspiring in and of itself. Beyond that, the population we serve is large and the needs are great which certainly makes our work daunting. But, it also means that our work here can positively impact so many and so profoundly if we can find ways to do it better. That challenge and that potential for large-scale impact are what inspire me about SDP.

Filipino American Heritage Month

October was Filipino American Heritage Month, please see below for some resources to help you acknowledge the contributions of Filipino Americans all year long.

- [Food and Culture Resource](#)
- [List of Notable Filipino Americans](#)
- [Interview with Chef Michael Arquines of Mostra Coffee](#)



Hispanic Heritage Month Resources for the Year

The School District of Philadelphia recognized Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15th to October 15th. In addition to sharing academic resource (linked [HERE](#)) the District hosted an hour long panel focused on identity, colorism, and representation. If you missed the panel you can find a recording [HERE](#).

Several resources were shared in our last newsletter which you can find [HERE](#).

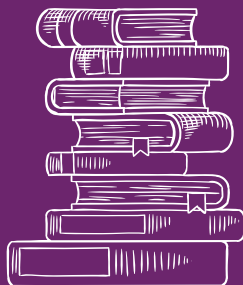
Remember, Hispanic Heritage is not confined to a single month, but rather should be incorporated in student learning throughout the entire year.



Native American Heritage Month

Books by Indigenous Authors

- "Eyes Bottle Dark with a Mouthful of Flowers" by Jake Skeets
- "New Poets of Native Nations" edited by Heid E. Erdrich
- "Indian Horse" by Richard Wagamese
- "Perma Red" by Debra Magpie Earling
- "Trail of Lightning" by Rebecca Roanhorse
- "Abandon Me" by Melissa Febos
- "Carpentaria" by Alexis Wright
- "Braiding Sweetgrass" by Robin Wall Kimmerer
- "Curator of Ephemera at the New Museum for Archaic Media" by Heid E. Erdrich
- "How We Became Human" by Joy Harjo
- "Ledfeather" by Stephen Graham Jones
- "Streaming" by Allison Adelle Hedge Coke
- "Future Home of a Living God" by Louise Erdrich
- "That Deadman Dance" by Kim Scott
- "Savage Conversations" by Leanne Howe
- "There There" by Tommy Orange
- "Whereas" by Layli Long Soldier
- "Dogside Story" by Patrica Grace
- "Winter in the Blood" by James Welch
- "Ceremony" by Leslie Marmon Silko
- "Feed" by Tommy Pico
- "Heart Berries" by Terese Mailhot



The Leni Lenape

A Land Acknowledgement

The Leni-Lenape people are the original inhabitants of Mid-Atlantic region, including Delaware, New Jersey, Eastern Pennsylvania, and Southern New York. Lenape means "the people." The tribe is also known as the Leni Lenape ("regular people") or the Delaware Indians (after the Delaware River, which runs through Leni Lenape territory.) There are approximately 16,000 Lenape members left.

For over 10,000 years they have been the caretakers of these lands and of The River of Human Beings, more commonly known as the Delaware River. The Lenape were the first tribe to sign a treaty with the United States and the first tribe to have land set aside for them in New Jersey.

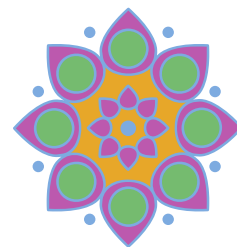
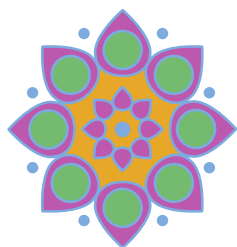
Over a period of 250 years, many Lenape people were slaughtered, forcibly removed and dispersed throughout the country, most of them now residing in Oklahoma. Some took refuge with other tribes. A large number of Lenape families remained in the homelands and continue the traditions of their ancestors up to our present day. Today the Lenape people from all over Turtle Island (North America) are revitalizing their communities. In the summer of 2019, some 300 years after being forced to leave, tribes from across the country returned to their native New York for the first Pow Wow in centuries to celebrate their origin.

Many place names in Pennsylvania are derived from the Lenape Language, such as Manayunk, Conshohocken, and Neshaminy...to mention only a few. In the city of Philadelphia stands a statue of Chief Tamanend, a revered leader among the Lenape, who signed many treaties with William Penn. The history of the Lenape is truly the history of Pennsylvania.



Diwali: The Festival of Lights

Diwali, or Dipawali, is India's biggest and most important holiday of the year. The festival gets its name from the row (awali) of clay lamps (deeps) that Indians light outside their homes to symbolize the inner light that protects from spiritual darkness. This festival is as important to Hindus as the Christmas holiday is to Christians.



Over the centuries, Diwali has become a national festival that's also enjoyed by non-Hindu communities. For instance, in Jainism, Diwali marks the nirvana, or spiritual awakening, of Lord Mahavira on October 15, 527 B.C.; in Sikhism, it honors the day that Guru Hargobind Ji, the Sixth Sikh Guru, was freed from imprisonment. Buddhists in India celebrate Diwali as well.

Hindus interpret the Diwali story based upon where they live. But there's one common theme no matter where people celebrate: the victory of good over evil.

