



# EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE IN SPS

FEBRUARY 2021 - DR. JESSICA BOSTON DAVIS

## QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

BLACK  
HISTORY IS  
AMERICAN  
HISTORY



### February is Black History Month

In February, we observe Black History Month to honor, celebrate, and remember the legacy and accomplishments that Black Americans have made in our country and world. See page 3 for resources.

### What's on the Calendar?

- 1/27 International Holocaust Remembrance Day
- 2/12 Lunar New Year
- 2/15 Presidents Day
- 2/17 Ash Wednesday
- 2/20 World Day of Social Justice
- 2/26 Purim
- 3/1 Beginning of Women's History Month
- 3/17 St. Patrick's Day
- 3/28 - 4/4 Passover
- 3/28 Palm Sunday
- 3/29 Holi
- 3/31 Cesar Chavez Day

[Link to ADL calendar for more](#)

### Where Do We Go From Here?

The start of a new year has brought a mix of complex emotions. On one hand, there is hope. Many of us were inspired by the inauguration which brought in the first woman Vice President, a Black and Asian-American woman. There's hope that in the new year, the COVID-19 pandemic may one day be behind us. And there's joy with the possibilities that a new year brings. On the other hand, the riots at the Capitol building have left many discouraged, hurt, and lost. So the question becomes: where do we go from here? I look to Amanda Gorman's poem, *The Hill We Climb* for guidance. The first line of the poem asks, "Where can we find the light in this never ending shade?" Throughout the remainder of the poem, Gorman explores answers to this question, finally ending with these words:

"When day comes we step out of the shade,  
aflame and unafraid,  
the new dawn blooms as we free it.  
For there is always light,  
if only we're brave enough to see it.  
If only we're brave enough to be it."

During such complex times, let us be brave enough to see the light in each other. Let us be brave enough to be the light for ourselves, for our students, and for our community.



## Opportunities

\*SPS is not paying for these opportunities. Only PD in the PD catalogue will count for credit (see those listed below under "PD Opportunities").\*

- [BIWOC Gathering Circle Conference](#), March 5-6, 2021 (shared by Dr. Mary Ellen Cobbs)
- [Free EdX Course: Becoming a More Equitable Educator](#)
- [MCIEA Mini Grants for Educators](#)

## PD Opportunities

*\*This is not a comprehensive list of all PDs, just highlighting some that are still open, with an explicit equity focus\**

- Understanding and Supporting Transgender and Non-Binary Identities
- Processing and Learning from Nikole Hannah-Jones
- Analyzing Dual Language Curriculum
- Womxn of Color Collective
- Best Strategies for Dual Language Education in a Remote Setting
- Educator Book Club: #WeNeedDiverseBooks
- Anti-Bias Education Resource Development for Early Childhood Educators
- Educator Book Study - Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents
- Anti-Racist Instruction for Pre k - 8: Integrating Racism and other Critical Topics into Your Lessons
- Trauma of Racism in Public Education
- High Leverage Teaching Strategies for Remote Learning Through an Equity Lens (World Languages)

## Resources

- [We Need More Trauma Free Blackness](#)
- [Talking to Kids About Race and Racism: A Conversation with Beverly Daniel Tatum](#)
- [Abolitionist Teaching Network](#)
- [Native Land Maps](#) that shows where indigenous groups live(d) (shared by Steven DeBenedictis)

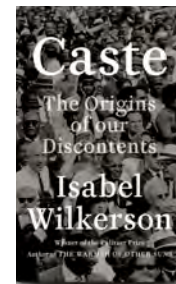
## Updates from Somerville Educators For Sanctuary Schools

- [Information on the Immigration Reform Proposed by President Joe Biden which will benefit over 200,000 Massachusetts residents and families](#)
- Next SESS meeting is on February 11 at 7:15am. Please email Sarah Davila or Helen Schroeder for the zoom information.

## What Jess is Reading

Safe Is Not Enough: Better Schools for LGBTQ Students by Michael Sadowski

Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents  
by Isabel Wilkerson



# DEPARTMENT OF EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE

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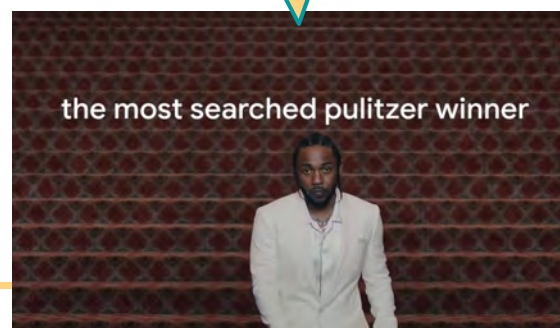
### Guidance for Teaching Black History Month (written by Jill Ceballos & Jenna DiNovis)

- Black History is American history and Black history began before slavery.
- Balance teaching about injustices and racism and Black excellence and joy.
- Avoid purchasing BHM resources from Teachers Pay Teachers unless you are purchasing from a Black creator.
- Read books centering Black characters and showcase the author (Bookmarks is a great resource for that).
- Highlight Black historical and present-day figures in a variety of roles (check out the Harlem Renaissance for a movement of artists, musicians, poets, and thinkers).
- Include historical context and significance and discuss how the past has influenced the present.
- Intentionally plan how you will continue teaching Black history and amplifying Black voices after February.

### Resources for Teaching Black History Month

- Do's and Don'ts of Teaching Black History.
- Black Lives Matter at School Week of Action (Feb 1 - Feb 5).
- Black History Month Calendar for Grades Pre-k through 12 (shared by Susana Hernandez Morgan)
- Black History Month: Teaching the Complete History.
- Black History Month: Teaching Beyond Slavery.
- Amanda Gorman Padlet (shared by Rachel Bourne)
- Black Lives Matter Instructional Library (shared by Rachel Bourne)
- Black History Month Library (shared by Rachel Bourne)
- Posters: Celebrating Black Mathematicians (shared by Rachel Bourne)
- Video: Black Scientists and Inventors (shared by Rachel Bourne)
- Honoring Black Agency & Black Joy.
- DC Area Educators for Social Justice (shared by Jenna DiNovis)

View Google's "Most Searched" Commercial from BHM2020





January 27, 2021 was International Holocaust Remembrance Day. For more information, see this article from Facing History and Ourselves: [What Do We Remember on Holocaust Remembrance Day?](#)

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View Amanda Gorman, the National Youth Poet Laureate and the youngest inaugural poet in U.S. history, reciting her poem, [The Hill We Climb](#)

Dr. Jessica Boston Davis  
Director for Equity and Excellence  
[jbostondavis@k12.somerville.ma.us](mailto:jbostondavis@k12.somerville.ma.us)