

A photograph of a classroom scene. In the foreground, a glowing incandescent lightbulb sits on a small wooden block on a blue table. A hand is visible on the left, holding a wire connected to the bulb. In the background, several children are looking towards the camera. One boy in the center-right is looking directly at the camera with a thoughtful expression, his hand near his chin. Other children are partially visible in the foreground and background, some looking towards the lightbulb. The background shows shelves with books and a patterned blanket.

## **WESTWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Curriculum Updates  
Supporting Diversity,  
Equity & Integration  
*School Committee Meeting  
April 8, 2021*





## **Strategic Priority 3.2**

Implement programs and instructional practices that recognize and support the needs of students and families in an increasingly diverse community.





## Recap from January

### Brief Updates

Curriculum &  
instruction

School & district  
culture

Recruiting, hiring  
and retention

### Shifting Gears

Moving from  
intentional to  
strategic

Data-focused

Research-backed  
programs and  
practices





# Diversity, Equity and Integration efforts

Curriculum and instruction - *school/classroom library updates, core text updates, PD on culturally responsive practices & classroom discussion with dignity*

School and district culture - *LTARCE group at WHS, Welcome Club at Thurston, parent series on talking with kids about race, guest speakers and events (Anthony Valentine, Michael Curry, Dr. Olivia Moorhead Slaughter), anti-racist educator groups, book talk with Jennifer DeLeon, book groups*

Recruiting, hiring and retention - *GBSHRN, MPDE, Diversity Network, job fairs, affinity group*





# The work ahead: shift from intentional to strategic

Leadership team training

Data driven efforts

DESE Diversity Network - data-informed planning for diversifying staff

Beloved Equity Audit - online tool for assessing growth areas

Harvard RIDES - strategic, cyclic approach to improvement





## Using self-assessment tools ...

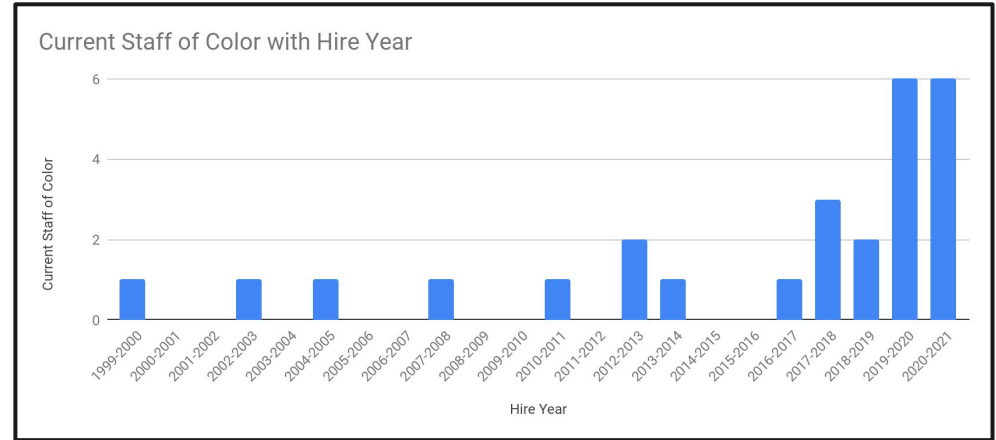
Before and during each Diversity Network session, district teams will work together to self-assess for the diverse retention strategies that are/are not in place to inform district and school planning priorities. Use the form below to capture an approximate score for each retention strategy component (1- not at all in place, 5- currently implemented), and any notes that highlight your district's progress against the indicators described in the "description" column. This self-assessment can be used as a tool to measure progress over time, capture key challenges and bright spots, and any considerations for school-specific strategies and implementation.

Our district currently has...	Description	January 2021		February 2021		April 2021	
		1-5	Notes	1-5	Notes	1-5	Notes
Clearly defined our vision for the teacher experience.	We have established and shared our vision for a strong instructional culture and the staff of color experience.	1	We have started this conversation but have not articulated a clear vision or shared that vision with the wider community.				
Clearly defined retention goals and benchmarks.	We set retention goals and benchmarks based on our vision for the teacher experience.	1	Without a vision, we are operating without specific benchmarks. We do have a sense of wanting to improve.				
A retention strategy	We have a data informed district wide retention strategy that includes proven retention practices aligned to our vision for the teacher experience.	1	We have some practices in place but not a cohesive strategy.				



## ... and analyzing data to set clear goals

Race/Ethnicity	Number	%
White	531	95.33%
Black/African American	12	2.15%
Asian	10	1.80%
Multiracial	4	0.72%
Total	557	100.00%
Hispanic/Latinx	11	1.97%
Non-Hispanic/Latinx	546	98.03%
Staff of Color	26	4.67%





# **Curriculum Update**

English Language Arts/Literacy  
and Social Studies



“

**When children cannot find themselves reflected in the books they read, or when the images they see are distorted, negative, or laughable, they learn a powerful lesson about how they are devalued in the society of which they are a part...**

**...Children from dominant social groups have always found their mirrors in books, but they, too, have suffered from the lack of availability of books about others. They need the books as windows onto reality, not just on imaginary worlds. They need books that will help them understand the multicultural nature of the world they live in, and their place as a member of just one group, as well as their connections to all other humans. In this country, where racism is still one of the major unresolved social problems, books may be one of the few places where children who are socially isolated and insulated from the larger world may meet people unlike themselves.**

Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop ("Windows, Mirrors and Sliding Glass Doors." in *Perspectives: Choosing and Using Books for the Classroom*, 1990)



## Key Terms

Culturally responsive - *approach to teaching that incorporates characteristics of and knowledge from students' cultural backgrounds into instructional strategies and course content (e.g., text selection)*

Anti-bias - *awareness of the learned beliefs and stereotypes about a particular group that can result in preferential/harmful treatment of members of that group (e.g., anti-bias training)*

Anti-racist - *commitment to dismantling the policies and systems that perpetuate opportunity gaps that exists for different groups of students (e.g., leadership anti-racist decision making training)*







## Westwood High School English

Text diversification across all grades

Updated essential questions for courses

e.g., "Considering racial and social inequities, how does American education either empower or stifle personal growth?"

Gr. 10 shift to World Lit (fall 2021)

New senior elective offerings

*Hidden Voices: Race and Culture in Literature*

*Hidden Voices: Gender and Orientation in Literature*

Summer Reading 2021



## WHS Social Studies

Updated guiding questions & content in grades 9 and 10

Grade 9 (World History) - *How do diverse societies respond to common problems?*

African Kingdoms

Columbian Exchange and Transatlantic Trade

Racism in America

Grade 10 (Modern History) - *Has modernization created a more just world?*

Haitian Revolution

National Identity in Latin America

Rwandan Genocide

Grade 11 (U.S. History) updating essential question and course content:

E.g., reframing Civil Rights struggle - Boston busing crisis







## Thurston Language Arts

Text diversification across all grades

*Why do writers write?*

*Short stories and poems*

Plan for summer reading 2021

*Students select from options*

*PTO-sponsored book group for adults*

Grade 8 Holocaust literature study

Focus on Democratic Discussions (not debates) in classrooms:

*"...grappling with an issue together with others who share different perspectives is a way to deepen one's own understanding of a construct, idea, or concept..."*





## Thurston Middle School Social Studies

Grades 6 & 7 (World History)

*How has the past helped to shape the present?*

African Kingdoms

Western Asia (The Middle East)

Impacts of Colonization

Greece & Rome

Medieval & Renaissance Europe

East Asian Religions

Trade & Climate in Oceania

Grade 8 (Civics)

*How do we understand our role as citizens in protecting the promises of a democratic society?*

Primary Source: [Democracy Lab](#) Program

Civic action project





**PRIMARY  
SOURCE**

Educating global citizens



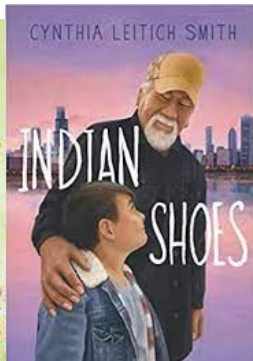
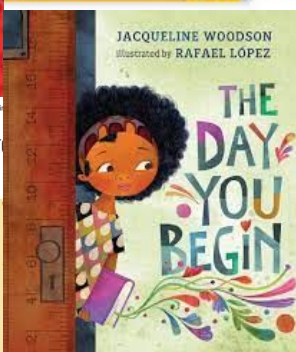
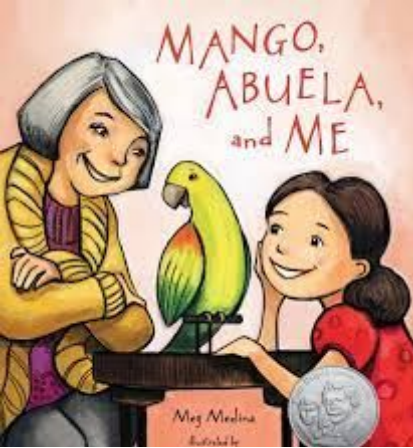
## ***Democracy Lab: 8th Grade Civics for the 21st Century*** **Detailed Table of Contents and Sample Lessons**

*Active and informed participation in democratic society requires individuals to possess a wide range of skills, dispositions and knowledge. Democracy Lab provides the curricular basis for nurturing the next generation's civic capacities. Designed for Massachusetts social studies classrooms, Democracy Lab's student-centered, inquiry, and issue-oriented approaches to civic learning aim to empower students to think critically, deliberate, and take action. Through thematic interdisciplinary lenses, Democracy Lab harnesses multicultural and global topics and perspectives in the service of fostering students' capacity for thoughtful and meaningful engagement in their communities and the world.*

### **Units:**

- 1. Ancient and Global Foundations of the U.S. Political System**
- 2. British and Indigenous Influences on the U.S. Government**
- 3. Youth Activism, Citizenship and Social Change ([Sample lesson 1](#)) ([Sample Lesson 4](#))**
- 4. Voting and Elections in Principle and in Practice**
- 5. The Supreme Court, 14th Amendment, and Civil Rights**
- 6. Civil Rights and Access to Education ([Sample lesson 8](#))**
- 7. A Free Press and an Informed Community ([Sample lesson 3](#))**
- 8. (Un)covering the World of News Production**
- 9. Generation Citizen Action Civics**





## Elementary Updates

### Literacy

Units of Study in Reading and Writing

Updated anchor texts and text sets from [TCWRP](#)

WPS additions

### Social Studies

Review in Progress

Curriculum resources used this year

Newsela

Kids Discover

History's Mysteries

INTRODUCTION TO INQUIRY: WHAT DO HISTORIANS DO?



Go to K-1 Inquiry Introduction

WHAT WAS THIS USED FOR?



Go to 2-3 Inquiry Introduction

WHAT ARE THEY DOING?



Go to 4-5 Inquiry Introduction

WHY DID THEY HAVE TO GROW CORN?

TEACHING — PRIMARY SOURCES

History's Mysteries is sponsored in part by the Library of Congress Teaching with a Primary Source (LTPS) Program, coordinated by the National History Education Research Center.

Content created and facilitated in partnership with the LTPS program does not indicate endorsement by the Library of Congress.  
Collaborative for Educational Services  
Everyone is a learner



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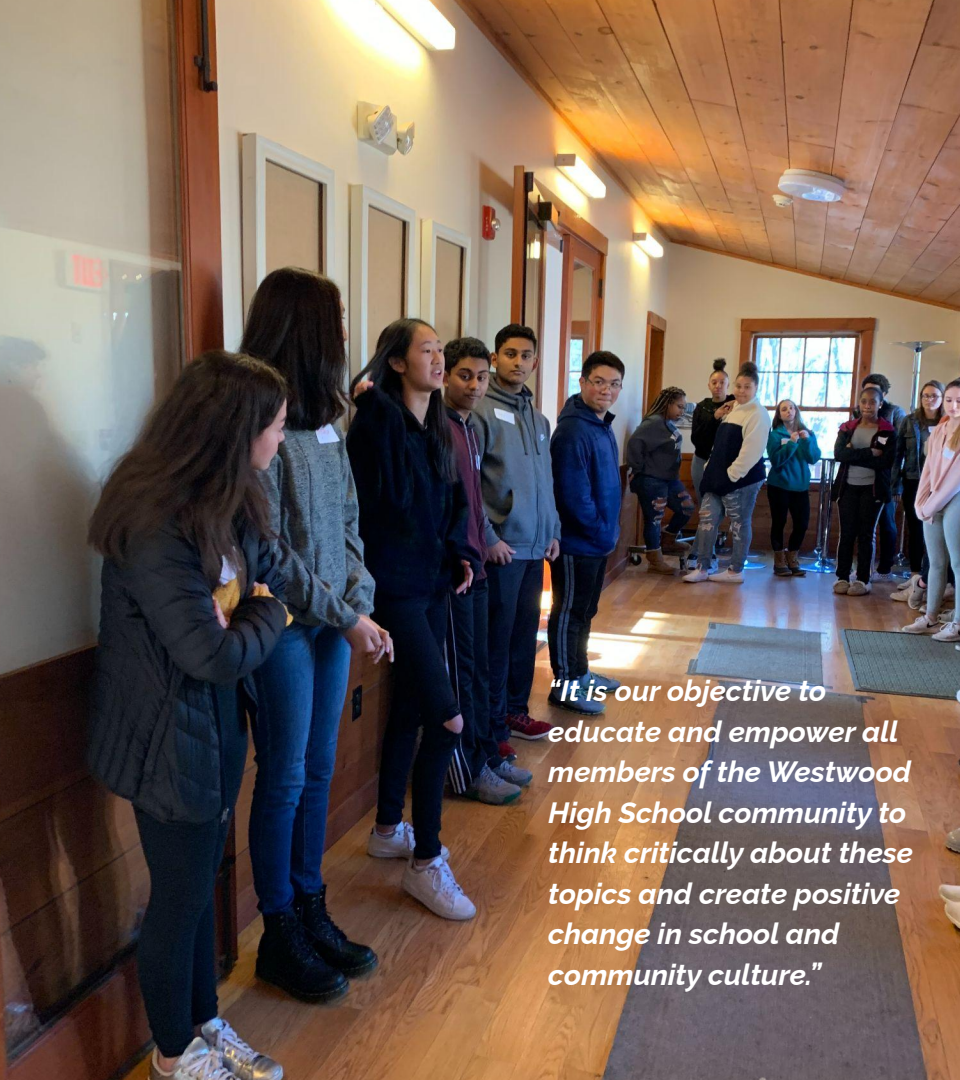
Contact History's Mysteries Team



newsela







*"It is our objective to educate and empower all members of the Westwood High School community to think critically about these topics and create positive change in school and community culture."*

## Co-Curricular Work

### LTARaCE: Let's Talk ABout Race Culture and Ethnicity

*Build and foster an inclusive and welcoming community*

*Learn and use correct language when talking about race*

*Become comfortable having conversations about identity*

60 students, 9 - 12

Created Instagram account

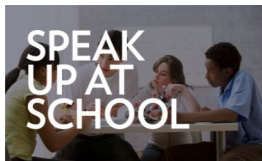
Facilitated Anthony Valentine visit

Roundtable discussions - response to events

Formed **Affinity Groups**

Launching a middle school group





### Speak Up at School

In the last webinar of our series on school climate, NEA and Teaching Tolerance will offer strategies for responding to biased remarks in a timely manner and helping students to do the same.

October 18, 2017 TOPIC: BULLYING & BIAS, RIGHTS & ACTIVISM



### Let's Talk! Discussing Race, Racism and Other Difficult Topics With Students

Join NEA and Teaching Tolerance for our second of three school-climate webinars. This time, we will provide guidance on how to have relevant and rigorous conversations with students about race, racism and other important topics.

October 4, 2017 TOPIC: RACE & ETHNICITY



### How to Be an Ally in the Classroom

Join Teaching Tolerance for this webinar on how you can be an ally and a partner in empowerment for marginalized students and colleagues.

September 28, 2017 TOPIC: RACE & ETHNICITY, BULLYING & BIAS

## Professional Development

### School-based PD sessions:

*Democratic Discussions*

*Difficult Conversations: Talking About Race*

### IDEAS membership courses:

*Anti-Racist School Practices*

*Anti-Racist Decision Making*

### District-created courses

[Exploring Self and Social Awareness to Create an Anti-Bias Curriculum for Students](#)

[Finding Common Ground in History: Understanding the Context for Today's Current Events](#)

[Creating a More Culturally Inclusive Curriculum](#)



IDEAS, a partner of the EDCO Collaborative, has been providing professional learning opportunities for educational institutions and other organizations for more than thirty years. We offer a variety of services, including graduate-level courses and focused seminars, that help your community develop anti-racist practices that collectively work to dismantle systems of oppression. Wherever your organization is in its journey toward true equity, IDEAS can support you!



### Acknowledging Tribal Land

We acknowledge the indigenous people who first occupied all of what is now called North & South America. Some still live on their original land, some were relocated, some were enslaved across the ocean, and many, if not all, were victims of genocide.

Curious about tribal land acknowledgments? [Learn more here.](#)



# Astro Girl by Ken Wilson-Max

HRL Learning Goals:

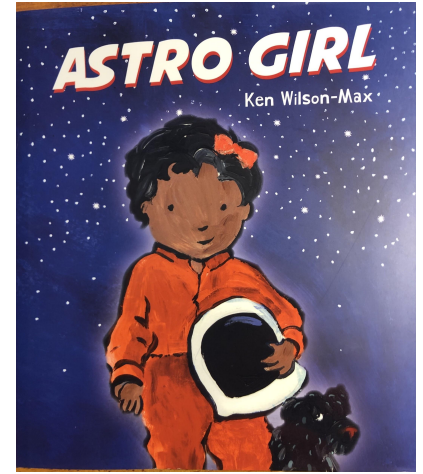
**Identity:** What does an astronaut look like?

**Skills:** Students will learn the word stereotype.

**Intellect:** Students will be introduced to astronauts that shattered the typical stereotype.

**Criticality:** Why are stereotypes harmful?

**Joy:** Students will create a Scratch project that explores their identity.







## Important Work Ahead

### Community outreach

School-based listening tours

Partner with WYFS

Work with Human Rights Task Force

### Participation in an Equity Audit

[Beloved](#)

[MAEC](#)

### Complete Social Studies review

### Engage all staff in ongoing training

Examining curriculum for bias/stereotype

Culturally responsive practice



“

In recent years, there's been a lot of talk about the reasons behind the low performance of many students of color, English learners, and poor students. Rather than examine school policies and teacher practices, some attribute it to a “culture of poverty” or different community values toward education. The reality is that they struggle not because of their race, language, or poverty. They struggle because we don't offer them sufficient opportunities in the classroom to develop the cognitive skills and habits of mind that would prepare them to take on more advanced academic tasks (Boykin & Noguera, 2011; Jackson, 2011). That's the achievement gap in action.

-Zaretta L. Hammond, *Culturally Responsive Teaching and The Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students*



