

# OFFICE OF EQUITY

## News & Updates

April 2021

Equity Learners and Leaders,

It is with unresolved sadness and pain that I craft this message. Pain, for the sad realities that exist in the midst of a global pandemic. Sadness and pain, for “the huddled masses that yet yearn to breathe free.” Sadness and pain, for the bruised face of America that is repeatedly being displayed. Equity Learners and Leaders, I carry great sadness and pain about the resurgence of and continuous attacks against Asian Americans. The media stories narrating the trauma and suffering that my Asian sisters and brothers are carrying are quite unsettling.

These times are reminding me of our former Board Chair, Ms. Marny Xiong, a passionate and fearless warrior for equity. One of the last opportunities we shared was in connection with addressing the xenophobic and anti-Asian rhetoric that began last spring. Her comments at the April 21, 2020 Board of Education meeting ring and resonate clearly for me. Ms. Marny shared that as one of few AAPI Board members in Minnesota, many people, young people especially, reached out to her to share what they were experiencing. She stated how we have been here before, yet with different faces. Her words expressed the cancer of racism; the divide and conquer; and the us versus them tactics that are mobilized against positive collective change. Chair Marny Xiong reminded us of the impact of the 1882 Exclusion Act and its repeal sixty years later.

The executionary acts, displacement, and condemnation that our AAPI community continues to face is reprehensible. Will America’s bruised face ever heal? Will the huddled masses ever breathe freely? I can only learn and lead with a hope “that a change is gonna come.” I invite you to **STAY ENGAGED** while possibly **EXPERIENCING DISCOMFORT** as we participate and/or witness this battle of racial reckoning in America. As you choose your role, keep in mind, the children are watching. **ALL** of our children are watching.

Please know that The Office of Equity is committed to serving you in the midst of the pain, sadness, and suffering of this period of reckoning. If you are in need of Virtual Coaching (1:1), a Virtual Meeting (small group), resources, or Virtual Collaboration for professional development please submit an [Equity Request Form](https://www.spps.org/equity) at [equity.spps.org](https://www.spps.org/equity).

Peace, Love, and Blessings,

Myla Pope  
Assistant Director, Equity

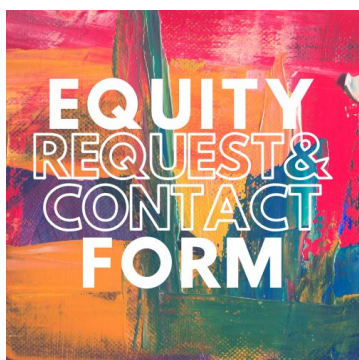
continued pg. 2

## Stories I Didn't Know: Filmmaker Discussion

Rita Daverns, whose family members once owned Pike Island, documents her journey in facing the complicated legacy of westward expansion in the US and her own family's role in that history. [Moving Lives Minnesota](#), in partnership with TPT and MNHC, hosts a virtual discussion with the co-directors and subjects of the film as they discuss the documentary and ways to create understanding and empathy through story sharing. **Sunday, March 28 | 5:00-6:00pm | [Register](#)**

## Supporting Community Health and Wellbeing Through Conversation and Healing

Residents are invited to attend a series of virtual and in-person community healing circles to address the hurt and trauma caused by the killing of George Floyd last summer, the civil unrest that followed in our neighborhoods and the ongoing trial. These circles are led by experienced individual healers who are embedded in the community and use their lived experiences, expertise and training to facilitate a welcoming, safe and comfortable environment for participants to express themselves. **Various Dates & Times | [More Information](#)**



## April Equity Film Night

### [Nextwave Youth Film Competition: An Evening of Short Films by Youth](#)

A celebration of the new generation of cinematic story-tellers, Nextwave Youth Film Competition is the premier regional showcase for young media makers under age 18 and an opportunity for youth to engage with peers and mentors in the field. Youth films are selected by youth to screen in a showcase at the Minneapolis St. Paul International Film Festival. The 2021 Nextwave Youth Film Competition will be screened in May as part of the 2021 MSP International Film Festival. Join us in April to watch the 2020 films, hear from program organizers, and learn how your students can be involved in next year's competition. **Tuesday, April 13 | 5:30-8:30pm | Register in [PowerSchool](#) (CEC/MLR (P4): Equity Film Night)**

## April Resource Highlights

Events from the last year have been difficult to comprehend, and it's not getting easier. The Capitol insurrection, increased violence against Asian Americans, mass shootings, and the upcoming trial of Derick Chauvin....it's hard to understand any of these, let alone all of these. Our lived experiences shape how we view and process this information, and that's true for our students as well. [These resources, provided by both SPPS and other organizations,](#) provide some ideas and starting points for engaging with yourself, your students, colleagues, family and friends around these challenging topics, as well as for self-care and healing as we navigate these difficult waters together.

## Justice for George Floyd messages & resources

We've [updated our site](#) with messages shared in the wake of George Floyd's murder, as well as ongoing messages as we follow the Chauvin trial. We've also gathered resources, specifically for staff, which provide ideas and starting points for engaging with yourself, students, and others around race, racism, and the challenging events of this time.

## K-5 Integrated Units

Last summer the Office of Equity and Social Studies Department worked with teachers to create [30 three-day units that integrate social studies and literacy](#). All units:

- are written specifically for K-5 distance learning
- include activities on SeeSaw, Schoology and Google docs
- are built around a children's book with diverse representation - all books available as multi-user e-books
- integrate standards from social studies, literacy and other content areas
- Identify culturally responsive instructional strategies and Teaching Tolerance social justice standards
- include Courageous Conversations Classrooms, tools teachers can use to develop themselves and their classrooms to engage in meaningful conversations with students

## Opportunity to Take Action

In 2010, state legislation was passed stating that educators must include the contributions of Minnesota American Indian tribes and communities in their instruction. Unfortunately, there was no plan, budget or accountability associated with it, and teachers have struggled to accommodate this requirement. The Indian Education for All Plan will give all educators the tools they need to accomplish this. If you support this proposal, please consider writing to your legislators over spring break. Click [HERE](#) for a template, talking points and how to locate your representatives. Pidamaya ye and Miigwetch!

## Office of Equity Professional Development Catalog

Current [PD offerings](#) and Schoology groups, including information about courses that qualify for [cultural competency relicensure](#). For questions regarding courses or groups email [equity@spps.org](mailto:equity@spps.org).