

# THE EQUITY LENS



Photo Credit: Brian Jones

WPS' service dog, Ricki Bear Golden (another legendary "RBC") and her handler, WHS Counselor and Department Coordinator, Marybeth Sacramone, visit with Loker students on May 20, 2022.

## IN THIS ISSUE:

**COACH'S CORNER: BACK TO SCHOOL & BELONGING UNCERTAINTY**

**DESIGNING A WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE SYLLABUS**

**NEWS FROM TONY LAING, PH.D.**

**THE EQUITY LENS' RECOMMENDATIONS**

**CALENDAR OF RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL OBSERVANCES**

Greetings!

I hope the summer has been a restorative one for you. This issue includes Dr. Laing's "News from METCO." There's a section on belonging uncertainty and suggestions/resources that I hope are useful to you as we prepare to welcome returning *and new* students to our schools in a few weeks. I have also included a few book and podcast recommendations!

Whether it's reading books, listening to music, pulling weeds (even they are wilting in this heat!), exercising, traveling, working a summer job, spending time with family and friends, or planting yourself in front of a fan, *enjoy the rest of summer!*

*Caroline*



# BACK TO SCHOOL & BELONGING UNCERTAINTY

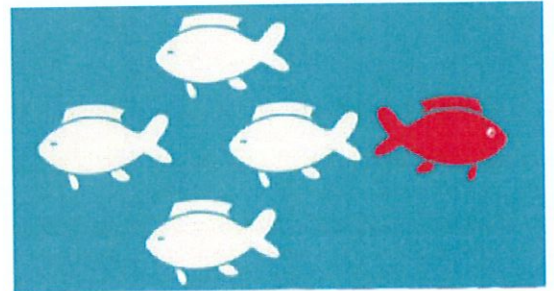
By Caroline Han on August 9, 2022

Last summer, I came across a theory called, "belonging uncertainty" that offers an explanation for persisting racial academic disparities in K-12 and postsecondary institutions. I have since dug into some interesting material, including an Equity Lens book pick, [Belonging Through a Culture of Dignity](#), that aligns with my anecdotal observations from the last 30 years in schools. It's hard to thrive academically or otherwise in schools when perceived and actual cues occupy the minds of students with marginalized identities: *Do I, and people like me, fit in this place?*

Belonging Uncertainty is the focus of this issue's "Coach's Corner." It's a timely and relevant issue as "back to school" can be a stress-inducing experience for many students (and adults). Our collective awareness and understanding of belonging uncertainty can lessen its negative effects, especially for students from stigmatized groups. Fortunately, studies have proven that there are school and classroom-based interventions that reduce belonging uncertainty, and a few of them are highlighted in this section.

Ensuring that students feel a sense of belonging in their school community has an even greater urgency given the pandemic's impact on their emotional and mental health and well-being. Many of us will be meeting students for the first time who carry stories of COVID-related loss(es), grief and ongoing struggles. How can we extend grace, compassion and flexibility in our pedagogical practices and policies to reflect this reality?

**Belonging Uncertainty defined:** "In academic and professional settings, members of socially stigmatized groups are more uncertain of the quality of their social bonds and thus more sensitive to issues of social belonging. We call this state belonging uncertainty, and suggest that it contributes to racial disparities in achievement" ([Walton and Cohen 2007](#)).



### **Belonging Uncertainty and Academic Performance.**

"Educational settings are 'raced' in the sense that the social construction of race is enacted through a variety of social practices in school. Much attention and focus are centered on sorting based on...performance and achievement" ([source](#)). Negative stereotypes about a racial group's intelligence may cause students of color to question their place in academically challenging settings. They look for clues in an effort to resolve this ambiguity: *Are kids who look like me with the smart kids? Do my classmates pick me to be in their group?* Similarly, though Asian American students may not be subject to the same negative stereotypes about their intellectual capacities, they are often the target of other negative stereotypes (e.g., "perpetual foreigners"), and questions about their standing and whether they "belong" in a variety of academic contexts.



Negative stereotypes about a racial group's intelligence may cause students of color to question their place in academically challenging environments. They watch for clues from the environment and an effort to resolve this ambiguity.

**What can we do to reduce belonging uncertainty? Please turn to the next page.**

# BELONGING UNCERTAINTY BUSTERS !!!



The tips below are research-based interventions that reduce belonging uncertainty for students with marginalized identities. You are invited to consider applying them in your work with students. Some or all may align with your current practices. And when they don't, it's normal to be self-critical or defensive. If you find yourself in the latter group, some questions that have helped me when I have had a similar reaction: *What is at stake for me? What aspect of my identity feels threatened? What do I imagine is the worst possible outcome of trying one of the suggestions? Who benefits if it goes well? Who benefits from the status quo?*

If you have questions about any of the content or would like to know about additional ways to reduce belonging uncertainty, please let [me](#) know. I'd be happy to assist.

## GENDER-INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

Let's consider practices that allow students to self-identify instead of relying on class lists.\*



**Instead of:** Asking students to say their personal pronouns publicly...\*

**Try:** Having students provide information on a form. [This "get to know you" form](#) was shared by a trans educator. It provides teachers with the information we need to affirm our students' names and gender identities.

**Instead of:** Referring to students as "boys and girls," "ladies and gentlemen," "Mr. and Miss" or "guys"...

**Try:** Using gender-inclusive words such as, "people," "class," "everyone," "learners," "students" and "folks".

\*The start of school can be stressful for transgender and non-binary students. Legal barriers often prevent students who use a different name from the one assigned at birth from changing it to reflect their gender identities. So the name on a class list may not be the name they would like us to use.

Resource: ["Respecting pronouns in the classroom."](#)

## PRONOUNCIATION OF NAMES

Many students who have culturally diverse names dread the embarrassment and attention of the back to school roll call.



**Instead of:** Taking attendance verbally & asking them to repeat their names...

**Try:** Having students introduce themselves w/ first and last names. **Record the activity for later reference and practice.** Or ask them to record their names on their phones and share the recording with you.

**Instead of:** Over-apologizing or giving a reason for your error with a student's name (*I'm bad w/ names*)...

**Try:** Offering a simple, direct apology (i.e., *I'm sorry I mispronounced your name*).

**Instead of:** Abbreviating a student's name...

**Try:** Asking on an intro form, "What name do you go by at home? Is that what you'd like me to use?"

**MS & HS Tip!** **Require students to learn each other's first and last names.** I gave a name quiz in my classes (10th-12th) in mid-September. It shows students that their names matter, and we are a community.

## HS: COMMUNITY-BUILDING IS NOT EXTRA; IT'S ESSENTIAL.

HS students want more cross-racial social contact in class and need teachers' help!

**Consider this:** They won't initiate it without teacher intervention. The social pressure is too strong, so when given the option to choose, students will stay with their friends.

**Try:** Activities that allow students to meet every other student in pairs or small groups so that by the end of September, students know each other's names and something about each classmate that isn't school-related. [Here's a 1st day of school stations activity.](#)

**Try:** Embedding quick [get-to-know-you questions](#) at the start of pairs/group work. In my classes, group work would begin with students introducing themselves and then taking turns answering quick questions like: *French fries or mashed potatoes? A pet peeve? Favorite number and why?*

Assigned pairs and seating (even in 11th & 12th grades and honors classes) increases social bonding and reduces belonging uncertainty.



**Consider this:** Students who question their belonging enter scanning the open seats: *Where is it safe for me to sit?*

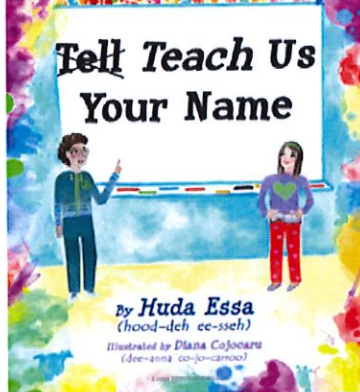
Unassigned seats work for most HS students. What about new students who walk into classes knowing no one? Or students who struggle with social anxiety? Or the only student of color in a class? For them and others, assigned seats can reduce stress and belonging uncertainty.

**Try:** **Making a name card for each student using index cards folded in 1/2 to place on tables by their seat.** I used them in my 10th-12th grade classes, and they helped in many ways.

**Try:** **Asking for their preferences** on a form: *Preferred seat location. A student you would like to sit next to/work with. A student whom you would prefer not to sit next to/work with. Anything else I need to know that will help your learning during class.*

[Fun seating challenge ass'ts](#) that require teamwork.

# K-5 RESOURCES



The author created [this free teacher's resource guide](#) w/ guiding questions.

It was the first day of school and the words I dreaded hearing tumbled out of my teacher's mouth.

In a cheerful voice, she said, "Now, I'm going to take attendance. Please raise your hand when you hear your name. Oh, and please correct me if I'm saying it wrong."

She sent all the students warm smiles after reading their names. "Paul? ...Kathy? ...Melanle?"

I cringed, knowing my name would come soon. "...David? ...Paula?"

I saw her smile fade, her eyes squint and her lips purse together like she was trying to figure out a tricky puzzle.

She quietly cleared her throat. "Well, let me see if I can get this one... Is it Karma-lie-yee-zeen-ald-eeen? Am I saying it right?" Her voice swelled with hope.

I bashfully nodded my head.

"Okay, good." She smiled with relief and content.

Excerpt from "Teach Us Your Name"

Balance Points - A #mathMovement activity.

2 3 4 **BALANCE POINTS**  
A #mathMovement activity.

## Balance Points – A #mathMovement activity.

**INCORPORATE MOVEMENT INTO YOUR MATH CLASSROOM!**

**[CLICK HERE](#) TO LEARN MORE, SEE STUDENTS IN MOTION AND ACCESS THE BALANCE POINTS LESSON!**

# RESOURCES

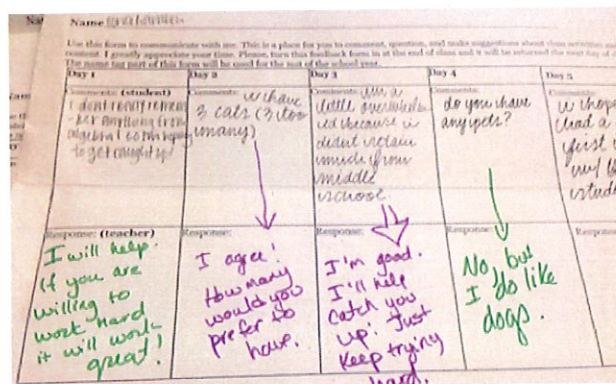
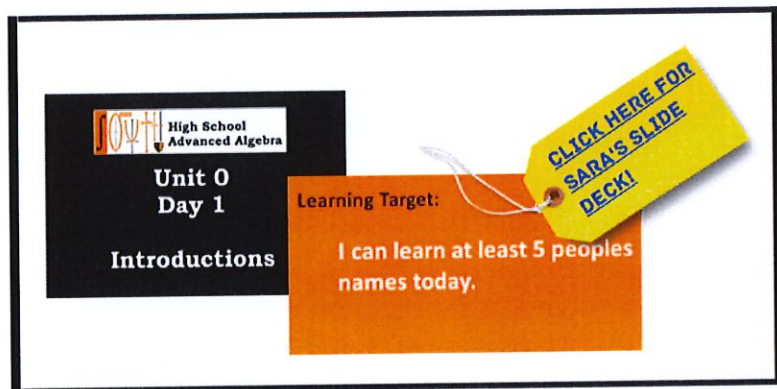
WRITTEN AND CREATED BY AND FOR TEACHERS

## GRADES 6-12

An Honors Algebra teacher uses name tents with feedback forms to get to know each student personally and communicate to them, her values of community, safety and belonging.



I am Sara VanDerWerf, a 25-year mathematics teacher for Minneapolis Public Schools. I have taught math in grades 7-12 as well as spent several years as the K-12 math lead for the district.



## TEACHERS ON TWITTER HAD THIS TO SAY ABOUT NAME TENTS W/ FEEDBACK

**Wendy Perlsteln @WePerl · 1h**  
 @saravdwerf I have been teaching for 27 years but you made me an infinitely better teacher with just 2 of your activities. This was the best first 3 days of my career. Thank you.

**Heather Johnson @HthLynnJ · Aug 23**  
 ❤️ this @MissSoltys  
 We teach students @saravdwerf's name tents help to humanize our classrooms #ITeachMath

**Kelli Soltys @MissSoltys**  
 Replying to @Teachmathorr @saravdwerf  
 This is my first year teaching & I'm doing the name tents this year as well. Yesterday I overheard a student telling another student: "This (in reference to the name tents) is my favorite part of the entire school day!" 😊

**Richard Hung @rnhung · Aug 22**  
 Day 7: Reflecting on a variation of @saravdwerf's [Feedback] tents saravanderwerf.com/2016/08/07/wee... Great opportunity to get to know Ss (and looking back at this now that I know some names). Tried it electronically this year through our LMS and convos were much deeper! #teach180

**Jonny Balsman @Algebra92 · Aug 22**  
 First time trying ideas from @saravdwerf and getting excellent results during week 1! No syllabus just relationships. #ITeachMath #MTBoS

**communicate with me. Write a comment**  
 I will respond to whatever you write. Thank you!  
**TO RESPOND TO:** How do you feel about math? What would you like me to do in class? What are you fearful of? What activities (sports/arts/jobs...) are you interested in?

August 20	Tuesday, August 21	Wednesday
<p>Comments: (student)</p> <p>Days at steam camp</p> <p>years I've been in school</p>	<p>Comments: (teacher)</p> <p>I enjoyed how the groups unintentionally worked well. I'm excited for this class because I enjoy math and it seems different from other classes</p>	<p>Comments: (student)</p>

**M. McGovern-Garcia @mmcgovern04 · Aug 22**  
 Replying to @Teachmathorr @saravdwerf  
 Ty @saravdwerf and @teachMcClean for your encouragement to do name tents. 1st time doing it and they've been a game changer. Not sure how to capture the effects in a tweet but ty ty. ❤️

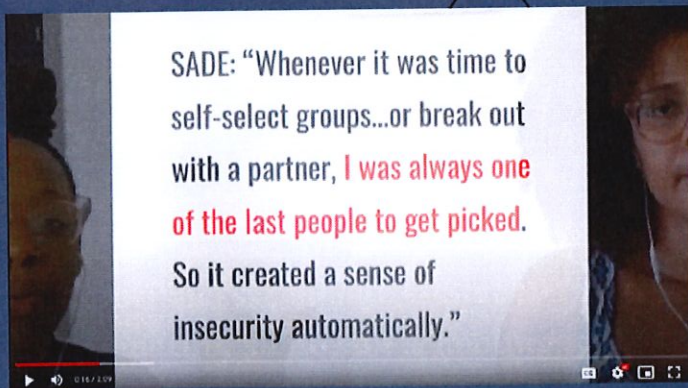
# BELONGING UNCERTAINTY BUSTERS !!!



### Watch 2-min student testimonial about belonging and engagement!

Last fall, 90 staff across the district attended a virtual speakers series with a graduate of the L-S METCO program, **Sade Ruffin did not take any honors-level math or science classes in high school because, in her words, no teacher ever recommended that she challenge herself, so she didn't.** She went on to earn an M.S. from Columbia University and a Ph.D. in chemical engineering from NYU. Her story reminds us that our assessment of a student's ability and potential is fallible. She was joined by her college engineering study buddy, Amara Brown, who was a high school math teacher and instructional coach, and currently owns a consulting firm.

This [clip](#) from the event offers a powerful testimonial about the important role teachers play in intentionally creating a community amongst the students in our classes.



I felt invisible, and athletics were the only times in which I found myself being seen. I was always the only Black male and usually the only Black person in my classes from 5th to 12 grade – **balancing different thoughts in my head about what people thought about me and attempting to carry myself in a way that made white people feel comfortable.** As other kids were focused on going on vacations and having conversations about who liked who, I was focused on the slivers of grey hair that were growing because of **how extremely stressed I was as a 12 to 14-year-old attempting to be perfect in the face of racism, culture shock, and feelings of isolation.** A report in the [Democrat & Chronicle](#) finds similar experiences about Black students navigating suburban schooling.



**Tim Herd**  
PhD Student - University of California, Los Angeles , Founder - Rising Black Men

[timjherd](#)

# WRITING AN INCLUSIVE SYLLABUS

*What is an inclusive syllabus, and why does it matter?*

**An inclusive syllabus** "incorporates specific language and strategies that are designed to foster a classroom environment that is welcoming and inclusive. [It] includes policies and resources that help to ensure all students are supported in their learning." The elements are easy to include with room to include important course information.

A welcoming and supportive tone has a greater impact on the academic success of students with belonging uncertainty than their peers. So centering a syllabus around equity and inclusivity can contribute to student success in our courses!

Sample language in an inclusive syllabus:

- *I am committed to your success. Some of us have greater life challenges or obstacles than others that can get in the way of school. Should they affect you in my class, I encourage you to speak with me.\**
- *I believe that you are capable and can succeed in my class.*
- *I value your background and experiences, and what you bring to this class.*
- *For students for whom purchasing course materials presents a financial hardship, I can help; please see me.*

*Other Elements of an Inclusive Syllabus*

- Missed school days due to religious and cultural observances. How flexible is your policy regarding missed in-class work and homework?
- An explicit acknowledgement that everyone, including the teacher, has a worldview and that there are different perspectives on all topics. Do you encourage students to share theirs? Do you have explicit guidelines for how to engage in a respectful academic discussion? I like [Courageous Conversations' norms](#).
- A statement about the importance of student well-being and mental health.\* Provide [the link to mental health resources](#) posted on the district website.
- *Grace and compassion re. students' circumstances can look like:* flexible deadlines and grading systems (i.e., accepting late work, avoiding harsh penalties for work turned in late, being explicit about how missing work factors into grade).
- A diversity or anti-racism statement and [link to the district's Anti-Racism Resolution](#). Here are [sample diversity statements](#) (from colleges).
- Universal design that makes all course materials accessible - helpful for all students, not just those needing accommodations:
  - Black ink (color can be hard to read)
  - Readable font size, clean copy
  - Videos have accurate transcripts
  - Google Slides lectures accessible on course web platform.

## The Belonging Challenge

- 1 in 4 young people feel they do not belong in school: a figure which is rising.
- Children from disadvantaged communities are twice as likely as their more advantaged peers to feel they don't belong and four times more likely to be excluded.
- Black Caribbean and special educational needs children are more likely to be excluded than their peers.
- Young people who experience a sense of exclusion from school or society seek 'belongingness' elsewhere.

## The Belonging Opportunity

A sense of belonging has been linked to:

- ✓ Increased student motivation.
- ✓ Increased staff well-being, motivation and retention.
- ✓ Reductions in student absenteeism.
- ✓ Other positive social outcomes e.g. health and well-being.
- ✓ Improved academic achievement.
- ✓ A growing sense of agency in students and staff: a belief that they can make a difference.

**["Place and Belonging in Schools: Why it Matters Today"](#)**

A Research-based Inquiry undertaken by  
The Art of Possibilities & UCL, Institute of Education (Nov 2020)

## NEWS FROM TONY LAING, PH.D.

Greetings everyone,

It is with mixed emotions to submit my last newsletter on the Wayland METCO program as the Director. Within the last three years, I have learned so much from students, parents, and colleagues. I have also thoroughly enjoyed getting to know our Boston resident families; working with an outstanding team, amazing administrators coupled with many outstanding teachers, and so many wonderful Wayland residents. As a METCO alum and soon to be former director, I look forward to reading about the METCO Program, and I am a firm believer in seizing opportunities that will help to advance my future aspirations. What follows is my update on the Wayland METCO program.

### Loker and Happy Hollow Elementary Schools

I start out my news with the Loker Elementary School and Happy Hollow Elementary School with the perfect attendance award going to Emanuel Posada who attended 179 consecutive days of school. Students also received perfect attendance in after school yoga classes with Ms. Knox. The students with perfect attendance, included: Abigail Ahodokpo, Calvin Arthur, Ameerat Ayinde, Kinverlie Boval, Naomi Cameron, Ta'Leah Dixon, Drayah Jones, Anari Leary, Kylie Moten, Akram Olatonji, Tyle Ponton, Ja'vonah Sanford, Ethan Teixeira, Ismail Nelson-Valante, and Ellie Vargas.

I also share the following reflections from teachers across Loker and Happy Hollow Elementary Schools about our amazing students' academic achievements, friendship, good behavior, growth through learning, hard work and helping others:

#### Academic Achievements

"Emanuel Posada consistently completed all of his i-Ready lessons and ST Math minutes". -Ms. Mattson

"I want to praise Ethan Teixeira and Leah Samedi for their thoughtful and excellent performances as Alexander Hamilton and President Barack Obama at the 5th Grade Biography Show." -Mr. Jones

"Naomi Cameron will often share very meaningful connections during our book group and read out aloud discussions. She also works with a peer or small group to read and answer questions from an article. Finally, Naomi worked so diligently and carefully on the i-Ready end of year diagnostic test and as a result of her wonderful efforts, she showed excellent growth in her overall skills in math which made her quite proud." - Ms. Olivier

"Drayah Jones was a kind and creative student. She made progress on her multiplication tables and made significant growth in i-Ready. She completed an informative endangered species project on the red panda and she worked hard to earn a weekly visit with Willa." -Ms. Reardon

"Tyler Neal is a thoughtful and friendly student. He made progress on his multiplication tables and showed significant growth in i-Ready. He worked hard on his endangered species project in the red panda and he likes to read." -Ms. Reardon

"I want to praise Jemima Saint Fort, Tyler Ponton and Ja'von Sanford for their terrific writing portfolios which they presented during an Author's Tea Open House." -Mr. Jones

"Ja'vonah Sanford improved a grade level on i-Ready and doubled her reading fluency score!" - Ms. Ciavarro

"I want to praise Tre Thezine for his wonderful Happy Spring project." - Mr. Jones



HH students Tyler Neal and Ellie Vargas enjoy the outdoors with METCO Coordinator, Ms. Baez.

Photo credit: Cristina Baez

#### Friendship

"Anari Leary was a cheerleading super star. She was a leader on the playground when it came to teaching her friends the latest cheer moves. She was a kind and thoughtful classmate who looked out for her friends and spoke up if needed and advocate for herself or others." - Ms. Dowd

"Don (DJ) Dixon was a good friend who was easy to get along with and was friendly with everyone." -Ms. Gimenez

"As a new student, Tyler (Ponton) came in eager to make new friends and become part of the Loker community. He has worked hard to grow as a student both academically and socially. Way to go Tyler!!!" -Ms. Furey

"Ja'von Sanford has been a fun and enthusiastic member of room 13 this year. He had many friends and always went out of his way to help out his friends. We loved having Ja'von in room 13." - Ms. Pimentel



## METCO NEWS, CONT.

### *Good Citizenship*

"Abigail Ahodokpo did a great job at field day—she was a cone flipping master. She was a kind, thoughtful, cooperative student who became an important part of Room 8."

- Ms. Cohen

"Kinverlie Boval was a kind hearted classmate in room 6. She showed up to school each day ready to learn, perseveres and stays with a challenging task until it's completed." -Ms. Dowd

"Athena Cheek was a sweet and caring friend as well as a hard worker. She took on each day with a positive attitude"

- Ms. Baez

"Sariah Dockins was a cheerful girl who was always bringing a smile to everyone's face and has a great sense of humor."

-Ms. Jenn Rice

"Ismail Nelson-Valante is a kind and friendly student. He had a smile for everyone and was a regular contributor to classroom conversations. He made every classroom a happier place." -Ms. Moynihan

"Akram Olatonji made such amazing strides from last fall to now and is such a great kid."- Mr. Mike

"I want to do a shoutout for Jianna Samedi for her incredible kindness towards other students." - Mr. Jones

"Tre Thezine has added so much life to room 2 this year. All four of his teachers were instantly charmed by his energy and humor. He has made tremendous progress as part of our kindergarten community and will be missed." - Room 2 team (Ms. Abrams, Ms. Sleeper, Ms. McKie, Ms. Dunk)

### *Growth Through Learning*

"Ameerat Ayinde's determination to learn and grow was amazing. She was not afraid to take on challenges."

- Ms. Santomena

"Ismail Nelson-Valante really values his friendships and was willing to learn and grow together with his friends."

-Ms. Nastri



Photo Credit: Dr. Omar Easy  
Students at Happy Hollow enjoy their last 5th grade affinity group meeting with Dr. Easy and Ms. Han. Clockwise from bottom: Emmanuel Posada, Ta'Leah Dixon, Ayehu Million, Ameerat Ayinde (not pictured: Levar Martin)

### *Work Ethic*

"Calvin Arthur has continued to prove himself to be one of the hardest working students in Room 16. For example, he worked hard on every assignment until he completed every problem no matter how long it took him to finish. Also, Calvin learned many specific and interesting facts about tigers for his 4th grade animal project. He was able to share many of these very impressive facts with Dr. Easy when he visited our classroom, including how tigers use camouflage for survival."

- Ms. Olivier

"Ta'Leah Dixon grew in her ability to use her words and tools to cope with things that were hard. She sought support and benefited from it."- Ms. Santomena

"I want to praise Sariah Dockins for all of her hard work in learning Spanish as a kindergartner this year." -Mr. Jones

"Freedom Martin was a very hard worker, and never gave up. He was also a very loyal friend. It was so great to have him in second grade this year." - Ms. Cohen

"I want to acknowledge Akram Olatunji, Calvin Arthur, Naomi Cameron and Ja'vonah Sanford for their hard work with their Animal Adaptations and States projects." -Mr. Jones

## METCO NEWS, CONT.

"Jemima Saint-Fort has worked so hard this year. She came into school each day eager to learn and ready to apply her best effort to learning and completing work. Jemima made many friends this year. It was such a joy having Jemima in class this year." - Ms. Pimentel

"Jianna Samedi is a student who works hard in class! She has great ideas to share and when she uses a strong speaker voice...everybody hears her." - Mr. O'Donnell

"Ellie Vargas was a friendly and creative student. She settled into Happy Hollow and made lots of new friends. She completed an informative endangered species project on Hector's dolphin. She loves to read." - Ms. Reardon

### **Helping Others**

"Kylie Moten was an enthusiastic community member who regularly enjoyed assisting students in the younger grades." - Ms. Pech

"Levar Martin has really grown in his ability to ask questions, connect with kids and teachers and share his sense of humor." - Ms. Santomena

### **Claypit Elementary School**

I am excited to share the following news about our students at Claypit Elementary School.

I am eager to inform you that students who participated in the 5th Grade play included: Assata Burton, Maxamed Cali, Deborah Ejims, Charles Williams-Mells, and Phillip Rosario. They filled in for their peers and spoke their lines on the day of because the person was sick.

The morning announcements for Claypit included several of our Boston resident students, such as Aaneesa Akbar, Divine Anyanwu, Camila Crosby Bernal, Assata Burton, Maxamed Gulet Cali, Taj Lopes, Kaleb Nigus, Jayani Norris, Phillip Rosario, and Manal Siidi.

### **Academic Achievements**

Zoey Chen and Trinity Franklyn both made wonderful progress in the DIBELS progress monitoring. They both reached year-end benchmark for each section. I was very proud of their achievements. In terms of math, they both also made significant growth from i-Ready's fall to spring diagnostic results.

### **Academic Achievements cont.**

Congratulations goes to Deborah Ejims whose math scores have increased by 40 points from September to June on i-Ready. She is in the 88th percentile for national norms. She is also going into the highest math level, that is 3 for math in 6th grade.

For Assata Burton, her i-ready math scores jumped by 56 points.

Manal Siidi exceeded stretch growth on iReady, was a student speaker of the morning announcements, and solved almost 600 ST Math puzzles this year.

Kaleb Nigus exceeded stretch growth on iReady, was a student speaker of the morning announcements as well participated in band and band concerts and solved almost 500 ST Math puzzles this year.

Jayani Norris exceeded expected growth on iReady, was leader of the morning announcements and solved over 900 ST Math puzzles this year.

Divine Anyanwu exceeded expected growth on iReady, was leader on morning announcements and solved almost 300 ST Math puzzles this year.

Big congratulations to Selasi Ahodokpo who is reading above grade level.

Chizaram Anyanwu has strong growth in reading, more specifically reading at grade level and supports students who may be struggling with a social situation.

### **Relationship Building**

I'd also like to give praises to a student who showed excellence in relationship building. Yolani Rosario has developed wonderful relationships with her teachers and peers.



Photo credit: Caroline Han

Pictured from left to right: Kitana Matteson, Manal Siidi and Emma Rojas, students in Emily Mullin's 4th grade class, have fun while working on their chapter books.

# METCO NEWS, CONT.

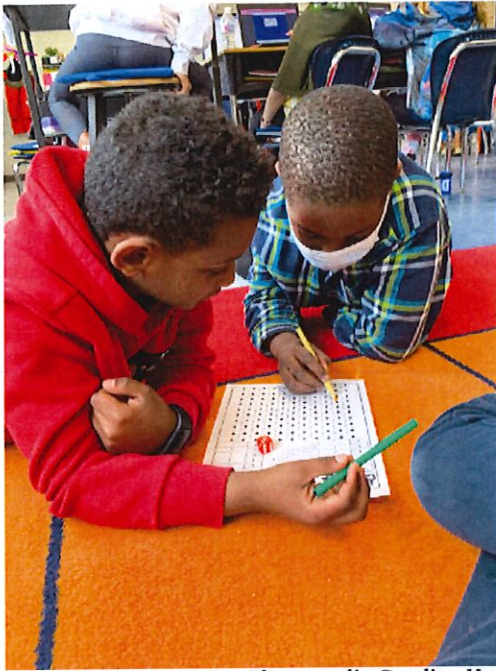


Photo credit: Caroline Han

Kaleb Nigus (left) and Divine Anyanwu (right) engage in a friendly competitive math game in Emily Mullin's 4th grade class.



Photo credit: Darcy Foley

Pictured from left to right: Darcy Foley's students at Claypit Hill, Charles Williams-Mells, Phillip Rosario and Maxamed Cali display their 5th grade biography projects.

Mrs. Foley, 5th grade teacher at Claypit Hill, shares:

Maxamed was the Student Council Representative for her classroom. He organized spirit days and presented information on the morning announcements. He presented Tom Bradley for Historical Figures and completed 566 ST Math Puzzles!

Phillip presented Jackie Robinson for the Historical Figures Biography Presentation.

Charles presented Harriet Tubman for Historical Figures and had a speaking role as a reporter in the 5th grade play. Charles completed 879 ST Math Puzzles!

## A TRAUMA SENSITIVE CLASSROOM TIP

Rather than asking students about what they did over the summer, consider these questions instead:

MY NAME \_\_\_\_\_

What do you **LOVE** learning about?

What is one **AWESOME** thing about yourself?

What do you most **LOOK FORWARD** to this school year?

What is **SOMETHING NEW** you'd like to make, create, try, build and/or learn about?

What is one thing you'd like your teacher and classmates to **KNOW** ABOUT you?

Source: Instagram  [wholeheartedschoolcounseling](https://www.instagram.com/wholeheartedschoolcounseling)  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

“  
In every lesson look and listen for students' assets.  
”

- Tonya Ward Singer  
in Education Week Teacher

# METCO NEWS, CONT.

## Wayland Middle School

Next, I'd like to provide congratulations to students from Wayland Middle School. First, I want to acknowledge the following 18 students, that is a huge number of students who graduated from the 8th grade.

These students are listed below:

- Aayah Akbar
- Ethan Alves
- Daniel Barnes
- Jaziah Bootman
- Nathanaelle Boval
- Elanni DePina
- Rejoice Ejims
- Braylen Jenkins
- Zuriya Lopes
- Sophia Nguyen
- Jayda Ortega
- Ayanni-Ali Powell
- Nehemiah Saint-Fort
- Kordell Shouder
- Abdulwahid Siidi
- Albin Valdez
- Keith Whiteside
- Erica Wilson

For the first time in at least four years, we have several 9th graders enrolled in honors biology this fall. Their names are: Nathanaelle Boval, Rejoice Ejims, Sophia Nguyen and Nehemiah Saint-Fort.

I am equally excited to share that the following 7th Grade students were "Students of the Month" for Academic Progress:

- Ethan Chen (Calculus Project Nominee)
- Joah Bigord
- Joshua Lewis-Guy (Academic Effort)

Additionally, the students from the 6th grade who were designated as "Students of the Month" for Academic Progress were:

- Elaine Ahodokpo
- Jeruska Boval
- Quincy Farrow (Academic Effort)
- Kaedin Burnett (Academic Effort-Math)

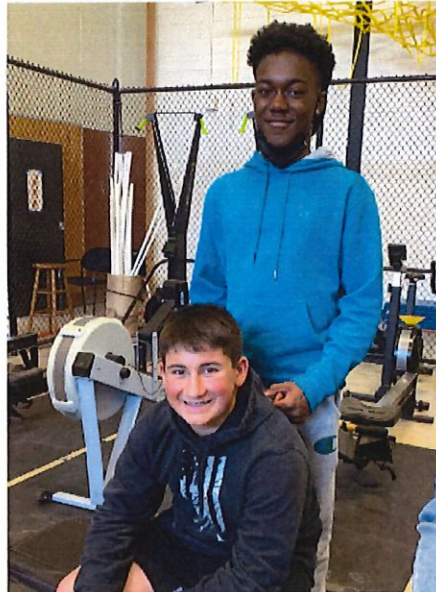


Photo credit: Unknown  
Students Joseph Lewis-Guy and Trevor Rosser take a break during P.E. class to smile for the cameras.



Photo credit: Ingride Francoeur  
Zuriya Lopes springs into action during WMS track practice!



Photo credit: Unknown  
Nathaniel Nigus earns an Honorable Mention in the 6th grade New England Mathematics League Contest!

### ***Boys and Girls Support Group***

I am proud to inform you that this year, I piloted a Boys and Girls support group. Wayland METCO alumni Tamira English and Jaleel Bell met with 8th grade middle school students in the Spring semester to mentor these students on high school expectations. The mentoring sessions focused on academic and social emotional success for students to prepare them on how to navigate high school. The following students took part:

#### **Girls Support Group**

- Nathanaelle Boval
- Elanni DePina
- Rejoice Ejims
- Zuriya Lopes
- Erica Wilson

#### **Boys Support Group**

- Jaziah Bootman
- Kordell Shouder
- Nehemiah Saint-Fort
- Abdulwahid Siidi
- Keith Whiteside, Jr.

## METCO NEWS, CONT.

### Wayland High School

The Wayland METCO program had eight graduates this year. Following is a list of our grads and their chosen postsecondary institution to further their education upon graduation:

- Victor Abalaka – UMASS at Amherst
- Michael Davis–Francis – American International College
- Donovan Edwards – Wentworth Institute of Technology
- Favour Ejims – Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences
- Dana Fisher – Westfield State University
- Lauren Grant–Lubin – Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences
- Guery Ortega – Massachusetts Maritime Academy
- Maya–Angelina Powell – Xavier University of Louisiana

Our seniors also received a number of awards and scholarships:

Victor Abalaka–The Sidney H Malkin Award; The Thurgood Marshall Award

Michael Davis–Francis– The Kevin Burke Memorial Award; The David J. Kelton Memorial Award; Outstanding Athlete Award

Malachi Dixon–Loatman– The Science Achievement Award in Principles of Physics.

Donovan Edwards– The Francis J. Smith Award; The Dr. James Wong Award, Honor Roll (4 Years), President's Award for Academic Excellence, The Robert Steel Tenacity Award; The Charles Gillespie History Prize, Louis Armstrong Jazz Award, Schomburg Scholar Award, METCO Fine Arts Award, METCO Achievement in Mathematics Award, METCO Achievement in World Language Award, and The Boston Parent Council's Student of the Year Award.

Favour Ejims– The Wayland High School's Principal's Leadership Award, The Islamic Center of Boston Award, The Colin Steel Memorial Award, The Dorothy Hanelin Award, METCO Achievement in English Award, METCO Achievement in Social Studies Award, Boston Parent Council's Academic Achievement Award, and Boston Parent Council's Social Justice Award.

Dana Fisher– The Most Improved Student Award.

Nyla Hamilton– The Classical Studies Award in College Latin II.

Lauren Grant–Lubin– The Charles & Cynthia Goff Award, The Chester Zwonik Award, The Citizenship Award, and The Boston Parent Council's Academic Success Award. She was also one of two students from the METCO Program to speak at graduation.

Guery Ortega–The Calculus Achievement Award; The Community Service Award and the Piano Excellence Award. He was the second student speaker from the METCO Program to speak at graduation.

Maya–Angelina Powell– Wayland High School's Principal's Leadership Award, and The Human Rights Award; The Boston Parent Council's Social Justice Award

### Welcome New Students into METCO and Wayland Public Schools

A special welcome to the 11 new students and their caregivers accepted into the Wayland family starting in the 2022– 2023 academic year.

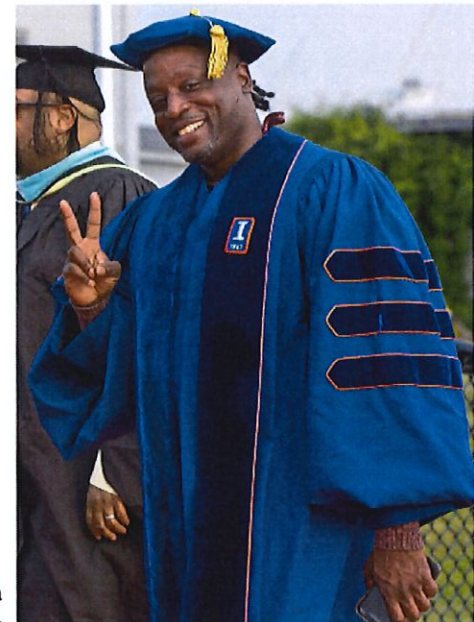
### Save the Date: Back to School Meeting

The annual Back to School METCO families' meeting will take place in person (pending its still safe to convene in person) on August 31, 2022 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at Wayland High School. I will send a reminder email with an agenda in the summer.

Have a great summer!

I will miss you all!

Sincerely,  
Dr. Tony Laing

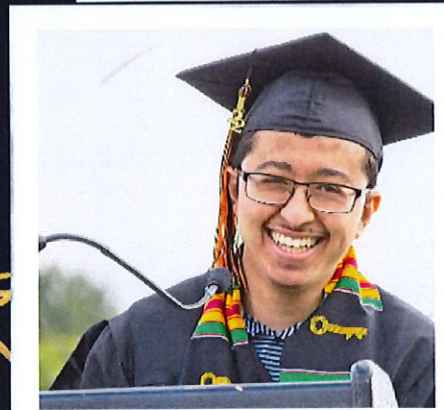
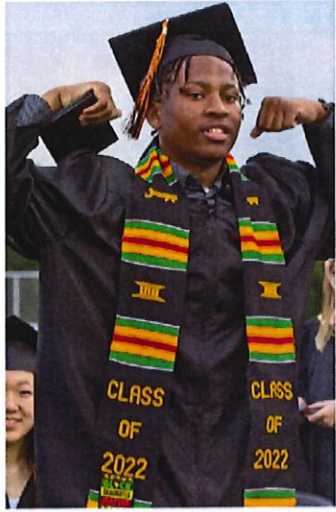


Dr. Laing joins the graduation procession at Wayland High School.

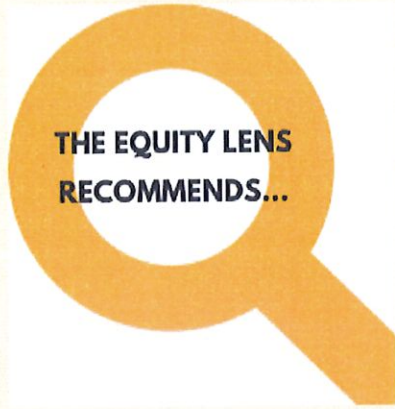
Photo Credit: Courtland Ferreira–Douglas

# Happy Graduation!

- Class of 2022 -



*Congratulations*



## BOOKS

### Mathematics for Human Flourishing by Francis Su

**Winner of the Mathematics Association of America's 2021 Euler Book Prize**, this is an inclusive vision of mathematics—its beauty, its humanity, and its power to build virtues that help us all flourish.

"This is perhaps the most important mathematics book of our time. Francis Su shows mathematics is an experience of the mind and, most important, of the heart." — James Tanton, Global Math Project

**Q** says: *This is one of the new books added to the DEB Mobile Book Cart! Su beautifully answers a question that every teacher has heard: Why are we learning this? or When am I ever going to use this? What students are really asking is, How does this connect to me and my life? or as Su writes, When am I ever going to value this? It is a great read for people who see themselves as "math people," and those who do not (I count myself with the latter).*

### Science in the City: Culturally Relevant STEM Education by Bryan A. Brown

**2021 Outstanding Book Award, American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE)**

**Science in the City examines how language and culture matter for effective science teaching.** The book provides an analysis of the "black tax," a double standard at work in science language and classrooms that forces students of color to appropriate and express their science knowledge solely in ways that accord with the dominant culture. The book then turns to instruction, illustrating how science education can flourish if it is connected to students' backgrounds, identities, language, and culture.

**Q** says: *Professor Brown presented at the 2022 Jumpstart Virtual Conference hosted by the Initiative for Race Research and Justice at Vanderbilt University. His unwavering belief in the potential of science classes to engage K-12 students who are underrepresented in advanced science coursework in high school and college, was inspiring. He offered a framework for how to structure units along with specific examples of how teachers can build upon students' experiences and contexts to teach science that they will remember and hopefully use to solve today's problems. He had me wishing I could learn chemistry again!*

## PODCASTS

### SEEING WHITE

*Scene on Radio* is a two-time Peabody Award-nominated podcast that dares to ask big, hard questions about who we are—really—and how we got this way. *Scene on Radio* comes from the Center for Documentary Studies (CDS) at Duke University and is distributed by PRX" ([source](#)).

**Q** says: *This podcast series (season 2, "Seeing White") caught and held my attention. The historical content, interviews and the dialogue between the co-hosts, gave me a deeper understanding about the creation of whiteness, race in America and their staying power.*

### THE CULT OF PEDAGOGY

A former middle school English teacher, Jennifer Gonzalez "interviews educators, students, administrators and parents about the psychological and social dynamics of school, trade secrets, and other juicy things you'll never learn in a textbook."

"After 20 years, felt like I was doing a very good, even excellent job. And now, I'm thrilled to discover that there are loads of ways I could be better. So appreciate everything I can try, [every resource](#), every conversation I get to hear. One of the best podcasts I subscribe to."  
—Ms Bobbalina, teacher

**Q** says: *The Cult of Pedagogy podcast has a loyal listener base of educators who continually learn and grow. Jennifer Gonzalez is deeply committed to anti-bias, anti-racist schools and classrooms, and you will find many episodes cover topics related to DEI work.*

## The Staff Mobile Book Cart has grown!



Thank you to WPS' PTOs for funding the purchase of more books for the Diversity, Equity and Belonging (DEB) mobile book cart. Their financial support has made it possible to provide WPS staff with access to over 100 titles on anti-bias, anti-racist topics. Staff can check out new releases and bestsellers for professional and personal growth and learning.

This year, there will be two carts to make room for new titles, including an expanded children's section! Stay tuned for the mobile book cart's 2022-2023 building schedule and an updated list of titles.

# Religious & Cultural Holidays

## 2022-2023 School Year

Source: ADL Calendar of Observances

### September 2022

September 5	<b>LABOR DAY</b> Celebrated the first Monday in September in recognition of U.S. workers.
September 5	<b>INTERNATIONAL DAY OF CHARITY</b> Recognizes the role of charity in alleviating human suffering, as well as of the efforts of charitable organizations and individuals, including the work of Mother Teresa.
September 8	<b>INTERNATIONAL LITERACY DAY</b> Call to action for universal literacy.
September 15–October 15	<b>NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH</b> Celebrates the contributions, heritage and culture of Hispanic and Latino Americans.
September 17	<b>CONSTITUTION DAY AND CITIZENSHIP DAY</b> Commemorates the ratification of the United States Constitution in 1787. Also honors all who have become U.S. citizens.
September 22	<b>AUTUMNAL EQUINOX</b> Marks the first day of the season of fall. The sun shines nearly equally on both hemispheres when it's fall in the Northern Hemisphere and simultaneously spring in the Southern Hemisphere.
September 23	<b>BI VISIBILITY DAY</b> Seeks to draw attention to public policy concerns and foster respect for bi+ individuals and communities.
September 26–7	<b>ROSH HASHANAH • Jewish</b> Beginning of the Jewish New Year and first of the High Holy Days, which marks the beginning of a ten-day period of penitence and spiritual renewal.



The campaign to have a Lunar New Year school holiday was spearheaded by Eunjee Kang and Jordynn Lee (Class of 2025). Their hard work and commitment culminated in a thorough and convincing presentation to the School Committee on May 11.

On May 25, 2022, the School Committee voted unanimously to recognize Lunar New Year as a school holiday for Wayland Public Schools. At this time, only two other districts in Massachusetts, Brookline and Hopkinton, close schools for Lunar New Year.

You can read more about the Lunar New Year campaign in the Wayland Student Press' in-depth feature story [here](#).

# Heritage Months & Observances

## What Are Heritage Months?

In the United States, Heritage Months are periods within the year that are designated to celebrate and acknowledge various ethnic and marginalized groups. These are times not only to celebrate, but also to educate others on various groups' histories and contributions to American History. These are important times that help us to understand some of our own cultures and identities, as well as others.

## September

### Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15–October 15)

The month of September, and part of October, is a time to celebrate Hispanic culture. This time of year is significant because the Latin American countries of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua all received their independence on September 15. Additionally, Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence days on September 16 and September 18. At 55.6 million, people of Hispanic origin are the largest ethnic or racial minority in the U.S. (17.6% of the total population).

See [Hispanic Heritage Month: How Hispanics Are Defining and Redefining America](#) on HuffPost to learn more.

## October

### LGBTQ+ Heritage Month

Beginning in 1994, the month of October was not just about candy and fun, but also about celebrating LGBTQ+ heritage. The month of October is dedicated to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and diverse identities/sexualities history as well as the history of LGBTQ+ rights. During this time, revolutionary icons, events and contributions made by the LGBTQ+ community are recognized and celebrated.

### National Coming Out Day (October 11)

This holiday coincides with the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights and stemmed from the idea that the most basic, yet powerful, tool the LGBTQ+ community has is coming out, and coming out could lead to more support for its members.

[Celebrate National Coming Out Day with HRC!](#)—visit the Human Rights Campaign site to learn more.

## November

### Native American Heritage Month

November is a time to celebrate rich and diverse cultures, traditions, and histories and to acknowledge the important contributions of Native and indigenous people. This month is also an opportune time to educate the general public about tribes, to raise a general awareness about the unique challenges Native and indigenous people have faced both historically and in the present, and the ways in which tribal citizens have worked to conquer these challenges.

See [Native American Heritage Month](#) on National Congress of American Indians to learn more.

### Trans Awareness Week (November 13–19)

For much of history the trans community has struggled to gain visibility and voice within society, but to help turn the tides of history, November 13–19 has been dedicated to trans awareness. This week is a chance for citizens to aid in the fight to increase visibility of the trans and gender non-conforming community. The purpose of this week is to improve the climate of settings such as school, the workplace, and everyday interactions by educating the public and addressing challenges of prejudice, discrimination and violence against the trans community. The week culminates with Transgender Day of Remembrance on November 20 to pay tribute to trans people who lost their lives as a result of violence and bias.

See [Trans Awareness Week](#) on GLAAD to learn more.

Source: [Babson College](#)

## SUGGESTIONS? QUESTIONS? LET'S CONNECT!

Caroline Han

Director of Diversity, Equity and Belonging & METCO Academic Dean  
Wayland Public Schools

[caroline\\_han@waylandps.org](mailto:caroline_han@waylandps.org)

