**Black Lives Matter at School Week Educator Resource Guide**

Seattle Public Schools (SPS) is committing to support Black Lives Matter at School (BLMAS) Week in solidarity with our students, families, educators, and community partners that organized to institutionalize BLMAS Week in SPS. It is our commitment as a district to create SPS-specific Black Lives Matter at School Week curriculum and lessons moving forward. By this time next year, we are committed to providing new, streamlined resources for our educators to use during this incredibly important week of action. As stated in our strategic plan, *Seattle Excellence*, we are committed to dramatically improving academic and life outcomes for Students of Color, beginning with Black and African American boys and teens, by disrupting the legacies of racism in our educational system. Creating SPS Black Lives Matter at School Week curriculum and lessons will be a step forward in that commitment to our students.

As a first intentional and explicit step forward, SPS has developed a *Black Lives Matter at School Week Educator Resource Guide*. The *Black Lives Matter at School Week Educator Resource Guide* was created by a cross-organizational team between Seattle Public Schools and Seattle Education Association, including educators and staff from Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction, Student Support Services, Department of Racial Equity Advancement, Department of African American Male Achievement, the Center for Racial Equity, and more.

The resources provided in this document have been collected from national Black Lives Matter curriculum and lessons, including curriculum and lessons developed by the Seattle Education Association, and other resources that have been developed across the country. Thank you for participating in this week and affirming the lives of our Black students, families, educators, and community.

Black Lives Matter.

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**Historical Context + Sample Language**

*Historical Context*

In 2016, Seattle educators began the *Black Lives Matter at Schools* (BLMAS) movement, which is a national committee of educators organizing for racial justice in education. In October 2016, SPS staff, families, and members of the community wore t-shirts, planned classroom and school-wide educational activities, and greeted students in a celebratory way as they arrived at school. Since then, Seattle Education Association members have developed BLMAS classroom lessons in alignment with the [13 guiding principles of the National BLM movement](#).

*Black Lives Matter at School Movement*

Black Lives Matter at School is a national coalition organizing for racial justice in education. The coalition and Seattle Public Schools encourages all educators, students, parents, unions, and community organizations to join the annual week of action during the first week of February each year. This work is happening year-round across the country.

Black Lives Matter has a rich local and national presence.

*Additional background information:*

- Black Lives Matter at School
- #Black Lives Matter - Herstory
- The BLM Glossary: Hashtags and terms to know – DailyBruin.com
- Teaching in Solidarity – Teaching Tolerance
Purpose and Learning Objectives

The integration of culturally diverse opinions into daily curriculum allows students to gain a deeper understanding of pertinent issues affecting their classmates. The principles associated with Black Lives Matter highlight concerns about the historical exclusion of people of color and recognizes the value of human life, regardless of racial and gender identity. These 13 guiding principles of Black Lives Matter provide a multifaceted approach to justice that can create the conditions for improving relations between people of different races. Included below are themes and learning objectives for each day of Black Lives Matter at School week.

**Note:** The learning objectives and educators’ practice should be differentiated in response to students’ grade and level of understanding.

**Monday:** Restorative Justice, Empathy, and Loving Engagement

- **Restorative Justice** is the commitment to build a beloved and loving community that is sustainable and growing.
- **Empathy** is one’s ability to connect with others by building relationships built on mutual trust and understanding.
- **Loving Engagement** is the commitment to practice justice, liberation, and peace.

**Learning Objectives:**

- Students will be able to contrast intent and impact.
- Students will be able to explain how empathy, accountability, and restorative practices lead to healing and relationship building.
- Students will be able to analyze their role in a community and the benefits of practicing justice, liberation, and peace.

**Tuesday:** Diversity and Globalism

- **Diversity** is the celebration and acknowledgment of differences and commonalities across cultures.
- **Globalism** is our ability to see how we are impacted or privileged within the Black global family that exists across the world in different regions.

**Learning Objectives:**

- Students will be able to identify the differences and commonalities across cultures.
- Students will be able to discuss the beauty and benefits of people having differences and commonalities.
- Students will be able to analyze their roles and impact on the Black global community.
• Students will be able to discuss ways to keep things fair everywhere.

**Wednesday: Trans-Affirming, Queer-Affirming, and Collective Value**

- **Trans-Affirming** is the commitment to make space for our transgender community by encouraging leadership and recognizing trans-antagonistic violence, while doing the work required to dismantle cisgender privilege and uplift Black transgender folk.
- **Queer-Affirming** is working towards a queer-affirming network where heteronormative thinking no longer exists.
- **Collective Value** means that all Black lives, regardless of actual or perceived sexual identity, gender identity, gender expression, economic status, ability, disability, religious beliefs or disbeliefs, immigration status or location, matter.

**Learning Objectives:**

- Students will be able to defend why all Black lives, regardless of actual or perceived sexual identity, gender identity, gender expression, economic status, ability, disability, religious beliefs or disbeliefs, immigration status or location, matter.
- Students will be able to recognize that Black people have intersectional identities (more than one identity that intersect—i.e. Black, trans, non-binary, US citizen; Black, cis-gendered, queer, undocumented, woman; Black, immigrant, heterosexual, male, etc.).
- Students will be able to identify cisgender privilege (cisgender vs Black trans positionality in society).
- Students will be able to recognize trans-antagonistic violence.
- Students will be able to differentiate between heteronormative thinking and trans/queer-affirming thinking.

**Thursday: Intergenerational, Black Families, and Black Villages**

- **Intergenerational** is a space free from ageism where we can learn from each other.
- **Black Families** creates a space that is family friendly and free from patriarchal practices.
- **Black Villages** is the disruption of Western nuclear family dynamics and a return to the “collective village” that takes care of each other.

**Learning Objectives:**

- Students will be able to explore the diversity among families, family structures, and family dynamics.
• Students will be able to describe value in the perspectives and contributions of Black people from different age groups.
• Students will be able to discuss lived and/or observed experiences of community members/extended family and friends contributing to a person’s and family’s well-being.
• Students will be able to explore the value, strength, and impacts of Black community solidarity and unity.

**Friday:** Black Women and Unapologetically Black

- **Black Women** is the building of women-centered spaces free from sexism, misogyny, and male-centeredness.
- **Unapologetically Black** is the affirmation that Black Lives Matter and that our love and desire for justice and freedom are prerequisites for wanting that for others. These principles are the blueprint for healing and do not include, nor do they support, ignoring or sanitizing the ugliness and discomfort that comes with dealing with race and anti-race issues.

**Learning Objectives:**

• Students will be able to identify male privilege (men/non-Black women vs Black women positionality in society).
• Students will be able to recognize antagonistic violence toward Black women.
• Students will be able to explain the meaning of “unapologetically Black.”
• Students will be able to explain why being pro-Black woman/girl is NOT being anti-Black man/boy (in alignment with Black-led Womanism).
How to Get Started + Additional Resources

Getting Started

Black genius is everywhere and it shines in the brilliance created for you to get started on developing your Black Lives Matter at School lessons. These lessons can be sensitive, nuanced, and complex, so it is important for you to feel prepared and centered in how you approach each lesson. Educators across the country have already developed a rich diversity of resources, curriculums, and activities for you to use with your students in their research, activities, and projects. Many of those resources will be linked in this document for you to check out, but we encourage you to explore the national website where there are resources that can give you additional context on the histories, reasons, and immense impact this collective work has had on our educational spaces nationwide: https://www.blacklivesmatteratschool.com/

Take a moment to reflect on these questions before you continue:

1. What is our school’s relationship to Black community organizing? Do we have relationships with local movement organizers? Do they see our school as a place that believes in their mission? Do they see our school as a place to connect with local families?
2. How are school-wide policies and practices – especially disciplinary practices – applied across categories of race? Do problematic patterns emerge when we look at how policies are applied to Black students and when we consider the intersections of gender, sexual orientation, and (dis)ability with Blackness?
3. How are the voices, accomplishments, and successes of Black folks uplifted in my lessons, units, and curriculum? Rather than focus on singular events or individuals, does my approach highlight the everyday actions and community organizing that will lead to change?
4. In what ways do our practices erase the histories of our students and prevent them from bringing their whole selves into the learning environment?
5. How do I understand the role that local/state laws and policies have on the educational experiences of my students? What is my role in working to change policies, regulations, and practices that harm Black students and families?

As you reflect on the answers to these questions, think about how your role as an educator intersects with your classroom, school, and our Seattle communities. SPS has made a commitment to centering not only content, but context and culturally responsive education, when bringing these lessons to our classrooms. Spend some time reviewing the Black Space Manifesto to help you think about meaningful ways to engage yourself and your learning spaces in these lessons.

In the time of COVID-19, many of us are only teaching a few days a week or are having limited access and interaction with our students. You can still be a part of the national movement for
educational justice by picking one or more of the day’s activities that do align with your teaching week or extend the lessons over multiple weeks.

*How to Introduce Black Lives Matter at School week to your class*

After spending some time centering your own approach to the week, accessing curriculum, and reviewing the Black Space Manifesto, it’s time to start in the class by introducing the 13 principles. Review this guide for digesting and discussing the 13 principles. You can also find “How to Talk to Young People about the Guiding Principles” on page 5 of the BLMAS Starter Kit. Employ co-generative dialogue this week by checking in with students to explore what they want to learn (i.e., African American History) and invite and empower students to co-teach. You can even spend your time focusing on that one topic and what happened just prior to and after incident.

*Considerations for Seattle students*

Seattle was included in national coverage of Anti-Racist, Black Lives Matter protests throughout the last school year. Students, staff, families, and community members who lived in Seattle have shared these experiences and have developed diverse understandings of the protests, police responses, and their continued activism can be seen on social media, political change movements, art installations, and community events that continue to grow and develop around us to this day. Students, families, community members, and educators have organized and worked together to institutionalize Black Lives Matter at School Week in Seattle Public Schools, in particular. Allowing students to see the power of their voices, their thought, and their solidarities with their families and communities through the intentional and responsive facilitation of BLM week is key.

*Tools and Resources for Educators Building Curriculum*

BLMAS Week is a national educational action spawned by educators both here in Seattle and nationally that has a diverse and rich set of resources already built and ready to use. If you want to explore and find something for your students these resources offer a plethora of options:

- Seattle Crowdsourced Curriculum for Black Lives Matter Week Focus Areas
- DC Curriculum for Black Lives Matter at School Week

Historically, each day of the week has had a different focus. We realize that this year in particular your opportunity to meet with and learn with students might look different than in years past. While we understand you may not see your students every day, there are daily lessons available at the different levels:
• “Daily Reading” for elementary K-3+, Check out this resource.
• “Daily Lessons” for elementary 3-5, Check out this document.
• “Daily Lessons” for Middle School, Check out this document.
• “Daily Lessons” for High School, Check out this document.

How to talk with parents about Black Lives Matter at School week

We understand that educators are facilitating these conversations with students in their homes and close community spaces as we remain virtual. Many families and community leaders will likely play big roles or have questions about the lessons and BLM more generally. Best practices include: open communication with families, clear organization and structures, and a clear “why” you are focusing on Black Lives Matter in your classroom space. This work should not be treated as a one-off or a special event, rather allow it to spur deeper learning and conversations for both you and your students.

Additional Resources

• “Who Gets to Be Afraid in America?” by Dr. Ibram X. Kendi
• Black Queer Oral Histories
• “The American Nightmare.” by Dr. Ibram X Kendi
• “I’m an Angry Black Woman. This is What I Want White People to Know.” by Candace Howze
• “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” by Peggy McIntosh
• “75 things White People Can Do For Racial Justice” by Corinne Shutack
• Works by Ta-Nehisi Coates
• Arabic, Spanish & English Coloring Pages
• Black Queer Films to Watch and discuss
• Anti-Racism Resources for white people.
• Black History Facts
• January 30 Virtual Curriculum Fair: Black Lives Matter at School
Matching Instruction to the Developmental Stages of Students

The BLMAS lessons are organized by Early Learning, Elementary, Middle School, and High School grade bands.

The lessons contain recommendations for grade band appropriateness. Some lessons might also be suitable for other age ranges or grade levels. In order to determine whether a lesson is appropriate for other grade levels, we urge teachers to use the Social Justice Standards: The Teaching Tolerance Anti-bias Framework, designed to educate students in an effort to make schools more equitable, just, and safe. This tool can help teachers determine if what students are being asked to do in a lesson is developmentally appropriate. It is organized into age-appropriate learning within social education. The tool is broken into four categories of social justice education: identity, diversity, justice, and action.

The Anchor Standards and the Grade-level Outcomes for each grade band provide teachers with a sense of what a student of a particular age range is ready to learn about identity, diversity, justice, and action. Below is a lesson review protocol to support educators in making informed decisions about age appropriateness of any of the BLM lessons.

Lesson Review Protocol

1. Review the entirety of the lesson, including the aligned BLM principles, supporting text and resources, recommended instructional grade bands, and question stems.
2. Consider the intended grade level for instruction.
3. Determine which of the four domains are relevant to the lesson.
4. Focus on one domain and the grade level outcomes. Read through all of the grade level outcomes for that domain and determine whether there is alignment between the outcomes and the lesson. Continue on with other relevant domains using the same process.
5. Make a determination of appropriateness based on alignment between the domain outcomes and the lesson.
Best Practices: Culturally Responsive/Anti-Racist Teaching

Philosophy

What kind of culture do we want to build together in our classroom that uplifts Black students, Black families, Black staff, and Black brilliance? How can we prepare ourselves, and how can we prepare our classrooms? The Black Space Manifesto can give you a sense of the attitudes and habitudes you can incorporate into your classroom to create meaningful space for this learning.

Preparing your Classroom

This is ONGOING work – not something to do in just one week. Be sure to engage in continued reflection and action regarding how you can become an anti-racist, culturally responsive educator, and how you can cultivate an anti-racist, culturally responsive classroom. How to Be an Anti-Racist Educator from ASCD has tips on how you can prepare yourself to be an anti-racist, culturally responsive practitioner.

- **Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain** by Zaretta Hammond has a lot of tips for creating a culturally responsive classroom. A particular highlight is:
  - Collectivist vs. Individualistic Teaching
- This [Culturally Responsive Teaching Classroom Walkthrough Tool](#) can help you assess your classroom for culturally responsive teaching practices.

Facilitation and Content

For an overview of things to take into consideration when creating a classroom that affirms Black student voices and experiences, read the article "Classroom Discussions on Race: Read what Five Black Students Say They Need" by EducationWeek.

- Be prepared to interrupt harmful comments or questions, and teach your students the skills so that they feel empowered to do the same. The Speak Up at School and Lets Talk About! Tools from Teaching Tolerance have resources and guidance on how to do this as an educator and with students.
- Create norms to set the baseline for conversations, and use protocols to ensure equitable sharing time. Contracting by Facing History and Ourselves has a resource on how to set up the classroom space with students for productive dialogues.
- Protection and empowerment of our Black students – Center the needs of Black students in your teaching. Don’t put them on the spot unless they seek that role.
  - Empower – Make space for the narratives, experiences, and gifts of Black students in the discussions by inviting stories, reflections, ideas, and contributions. If they volunteer, call on them first.
• Protection – Don’t call on them if they don’t want to share, or tokenize Black students and students of color by putting them on the spot. Model taking an anti-racist, pro-Black stance by sharing your thoughts as an educator, and interrupting oppressive comments and micro-aggressions as they arise.

• **Counter Narratives – How are they showing up in your classroom?**
  o Uplifting Pro-Blackness and Black Excellence in the content. [This article](#) shares about the importance of counter-narratives of black resilience and strength.
  o Supporting students in developing a positive racial identity.
  o **Windows and Mirrors in your classroom:** Are kids seeing themselves in the classroom? A “window” is a text that exposes students to different experiences, while a “mirror” text exposes students to experiences that are different from theirs. [This article](#) from *Teaching Tolerance* explains how to incorporate widow and mirror texts in your classroom.

*Other Culturally Responsive Teaching Resources*

• *Culturally Responsive Education in the Classroom* by Adeyemi Steambridge
• *We Got This* by Cornelius Minor
• *Teaching about Controversial Issues* by Morningside Center
Self-Reflection + Optional Professional Learning Plan

Are you prepared for Black Lives Matter at School Week?

An educator’s professional and personal preparedness to deliver Black-centric content is essential to ensuring we meet the desired outcomes of this week in a way that not only avoids any harm to students, their families, and their communities, but in a way that removes barriers to students’ empowerment. It is important that you take a moment to conduct an honest self-assessment so you are aware of where and how to improve your practice and plans before heading into the classroom during BLMAS Week.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS FROM BLM NATIONAL SITE

- Do you understand the purpose/mission of Black Lives Matter, as it’s defined by BLM?
- Are you comfortable talking about race?
- Is your practice differentiated and responsive to the various cultures and racial demographic of the students/participants?
- Do you understand how to eliminate deficit language and narratives from your delivery?
- Do you understand how to eliminate the practice of tokenizing Black students in attempts to teach Black-centric content? Do you have a plan to amplify Black students, families, and community without tokenizing them?
- Have you done your own identity work (i.e., explored your own racial identity and how you serve to dismantle or uphold systems of racism)?
- Have you explored your racial identity through the lens of a racial identity model?

What if you don’t feel prepared?

Not everyone feels prepared to teach BLMAS week lessons and that is okay. Here are steps you can take to feel better prepared:

- Contact educators in your school that do have a grasp on BLM content and can serve as a resource during the BLM week.
- Sign up for support. Curriculum, Assessments and Instruction is partnering with the Department of Racial Equity Advancement to develop a plan of support over the next year so educators feel more prepared for BLMAS Week in 2022.

If your school has a Racial Equity Team, the Department of Racial Equity Advancement will also help you connect with a racial equity coach for support and guidance. SPS will also invest in professional learning opportunities to help you execute a professional development plan, so you’re better prepared to lead learning during Black Lives Matter at School Week next year.