



THE TORCH

(CRTP NEWSLETTER) AUG '13



Welcome back for another great year with the Civil Rights Team Project. We are very much looking forward to the 2013-2014 school year, and it starts with our first edition of our bi-monthly newsletter, *The Torch*. We are embracing the *news-* part of the word *newsletter* in *The Torch* this year. Here are the regular features you can expect every other month here:

On Our Radar: Major events and happenings that are on our radar screen.

From our Teams: News and information about your civil rights teams and affiliated groups and what you're doing to address issues of bias in your schools.

The Civil Rights Team Project in the News: Media coverage for the CRTP.

From the Office: News from Brandon and Debi and what's happening with the CRTP.

From Edmodo: Information about and from the CRTP group at Edmodo.

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This newsletter is written and distributed by the Civil Rights Team Project, a state-wide program under the auspices of the Maine Office of the Attorney General. The mission of the Civil Rights Team Project is to increase the safety of elementary, middle level, and high school students by reducing bias-motivated behaviors and harassment and in schools.

Janet Mills—Attorney General

Debi Lettre—Civil Rights Project Administrator

Brandon Baldwin—Schools/Curriculum Coordinator



On Our Radar:

Here's everything we've got our eyes on right now...

CRTP Advisor Trainings (September 17, 23, 24, 26):

- Information was sent to advisors through our contact lists. Civil rights team advisors are *expected* to attend; affiliated group advisors are *encouraged* to attend. Go ahead and register now!



National Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15-October 15):

- Information available at: <http://hispanicheritagemonth.gov>

LGBT History Month (October):

- Information available at: <http://lgbthistorymonth.com>

GLSEN's Ally Week (October 21-25):

- Information available at: www.allyweek.org

Mix It Up at Lunch Day (October 29):

- Information available at: www.tolerance.org/mix-it-up



From the Teams:

Nothing... Yet

Summer vacation tends to directly interfere with the productivity of our teams.

With the new expectation that teams are active from September through June, though, this space should be filled with beginning-of-the-year accomplishments from the CRTP in our October edition of *The Torch*.

Of course, the only way that it will get filled is if you let me know what you're doing. We like to highlight anything you're doing to address issues of bias, whether it's something small or a major campaign. Please share!



The Civil Rights Team Project In the News

If your team gets *any* sort of press coverage, please send me the link. I'll include it here.

(On a related note, please try and get some press coverage.)



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From the Office:

New Additions to the Civil Rights Team Project

We've got several new schools joining the Civil Rights Team Project this fall. Here's a big CRTP welcome to Mt. View Elementary School, Saco Middle School, and South Portland High School. (And I'm sure we'll have a few more new schools to report in our October edition of *The Torch*, too!)



Increased Online Presence: Edmodo and Dropbox

In an effort to create more of a CRTP community and make our content more accessible, we've increased our online presence. Specifically, we've moved more of our content online so that you can easily access it whenever and wherever you need it.

So where is it?

It's on Edmodo. Access the library there and you'll have a permanent collection of our most important content. You can access the library by clicking on the open book icon in the upper left corner of your screen once you login.

And it's on Dropbox. Dropbox offers online storage for all the important CRTP documents and files. You can access them anywhere, anytime without even having to create an account. It's like a permanently available toolbox.

You can access the Civil Rights Team Project Dropbox folder by [clicking here](#).

And don't worry about the future of this newsletter. You'll still get a copy of *The Torch* every other month. But some of the content here will nudge/push you online, where the content is more timely and accessible. I respect the fact that many of us are more comfortable reading a traditional newsletter. You can still have that, but it's time to embrace the possibilities that online content and communication offer the CRTP.

Project Ideas and Initiatives

In June I promised that I'd create a series of 20-25 project ideas and initiatives. They would all bear the CRTP seal of approval and help direct you and your teams towards best practices in addressing issues of bias in your schools.

I am pleased to report that those project ideas and initiatives are completed. You've got 20 to pick from, and they are diverse. Some are appropriate for all ages while some are best targeted for a specific age group. Some are small in scale while some require major



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commitment. Some are detailed action plans while some are more general and open-ended. You should have no problem finding something that you can use.

Perhaps you are wondering just *how* you find these project ideas and initiatives. I've tried to make it easy for you. I've compiled all 20 of them into one document, complete with a table of contents and individual descriptions, but also separated them into 20 separate documents. Access as many or as few as you want.

But *where*? Through Edmodo, Dropbox, or directly from me.

This is pretty exciting news, but perhaps best of all... I've got plenty more ideas! I'm going to create even more of these project ideas and initiatives in the future; prepare to be overwhelmed with great ideas.

CRTP-Sponsored Theme Weeks

This year, I'll be offering presentations to support civil rights teams as they celebrate and promote the following theme weeks:

- Bias: It Happens Week, Dec. 9-13, HS
- No Name-Calling Week, Jan. 21-24, MS and HS
- Be Yourself Week, Feb. 3-7, MS
- Be Yourself Week, Feb. 24-28, ES
- All Alike Week, March 10-14, MS and HS
- All Alike Week, March 24-28, ES

(All of these weeks are CRTP creations except No Name-Calling Week, which is sponsored by GLSEN.)

I will also offer all these presentations in Aroostook County the week of April 7-11.

For more information on these weeks, including how to request a presentation, you can access the information through Edmodo, Dropbox, or directly from me.

I look forward to visiting many schools this year and supporting your civil rights teams and their efforts to celebrate and promote the ideas behind these theme weeks.

Elementary Training Scenarios

In an effort to help elementary school advisors keep their teams focused on issues of bias, I've created a series of 20-something scenarios. These scenarios will help elementary school students identify examples of bias behaviors that might occur in a school setting. Through repetition, students can reach a point where they learn to recognize the bias in the scenarios.



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You can probably guess where you can access these scenarios: Edmodo, Dropbox, me.

Advisor Trainings

Our annual advisor trainings feature several exciting developments, including:

- **Grouping!** Advisors who did not attend last year's trainings will have a training session in the basics of anti-bias, while those who did attend last year's trainings will work in small groups and discuss their experiences from the 2013-2014 school year.
- **Guest presenters!** Your end of year reports made it clear that you were hungry for some ideas on how to get the most out of your teams. I went out and got the best people I know to help you achieve this. The Maine Youth Action Network (MYAN) is dedicated to "empower and prepare youth and adults to partner for positive change," and they'll be conducting a two-hour workshop in the afternoon focused on how you can get the most out of your students this year.
- **The Eiffel Tower!** The world's tallest iron structure will be playing a significant role in this year's advisor trainings, because... well, why not?

We look forward to seeing you soon at the advisor trainings. It always energizes us here at the CRTP, and our goal is to have you feeling the same.

Student Trainings

Info coming soon!



From Edmodo:

Edmodo has made some changes to their look. You may or may not notice these changes. It's a very simplified and clean interface that is pretty user-friendly.

They've also done the grammatically correct thing and capitalized *Edmodo*. I'm pretty happy about this, as I cringed every single time I wrote the lowercased *edmodo*.



Summer was a slow-down period for the CRTP Edmodo group. I had *plenty* of stuff to share, but I showed some restraint, only posting my series of project ideas and initiatives. Those are up and available as individual posts. You can access them on the main page, or visit the library and see them all.

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Now that summer is over and the school year has officially begun, expect to see daily content on the Edmodo site, Monday through Friday. That content will include anything I think benefits you in your role as a CRTP advisor. That means quotes, news, pop culture, videos, articles, blog posts, upcoming events, and whatever else I can find out there. Think of me as your online curator for all things civil rights.

If you have some suggestions, please send them my way.

(You can access the CRTP Edmodo group by logging in at www.edmodo.com.)