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Torch (October 2013)

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Civil Rights Team Project

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THE TORCH (CRTP NEWSLETTER) OCT '13



Hey, Civil Rights Team Project community! Enjoy the October edition of our bimonthly newsletter, *The Torch*. Here's what you'll find inside:

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

From the 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 in our 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 in the next three months...

National Hispanic Heritage Month (through 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

CRTP Student Trainings (sessions run from October 25-November 21):

- You and your team have been assigned a date and sent information and registration instructions via e-mail!

National American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month (November):

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

Transgender Day of Remembrance (November 20):

- The Transgender Day of Remembrance is recognized annually each November 20. It is a day to memorialize fallen members of the trans* community who have been killed as a result of transphobia and hate.





From the Teams:



At Caribou High School...

the civil rights team is taking measures to increase their membership and profile. They created personalized

invitations for students who had expressed previous interest in joining the civil rights team. (You can see one on the next page.) They also set up an anti-bias scarecrow that is prominently displayed in the school's entryway, thus completing *two* of the CRTP ready-made project ideas at once (Creating a Welcoming Entryway *and* Scare Away Bias).

Hey, Caribou High School civil rights team: Good job showing your classmates that there's nothing to be scared of in joining you on the civil rights team... but bias had better beware. (And thanks to their advisor, Alana Margeson, for sharing.)

At Carrabec High School... the staff will hear from members of the school's civil rights team at their October staff meeting. The team will present on the importance of adult voices in recognizing and addressing bias behaviors. Team members have noted that adults often do not notice the bias behaviors occurring around them, and that students then assume that the lack of adult response translates to acceptance of the behaviors. Real student-adult dialogue seems like a great starting point for breaking this vicious cycle.

Hey, Carrabec High School civil rights team: Good job picking right up where you left off last year and including adults in your conversations about bias. (And thanks to their advisors, Katie Hall and Lisa Savage, for sharing.)

At Wiscasset Middle School... for the second straight year, members of the school's civil rights team greeted all of their classmates as they made their way inside the building for the first day of school. The civil rights team was out on the sidewalk good and early, handing out bookmarks to their classmates. The bookmarks featured basic information about the team and a wonderful statement about safe schools from Teaching Tolerance. (See the bookmark on the next page.)

Hey, WMS civil rights team: Good job getting a project done early and getting information about the team out to your classmates. (And thanks to their advisor, Kyle Beeton, for sharing.)



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WMS Civil Rights Team

Wants to welcome you back to school.

Our goal is to help make WMS a place where differences are not only accepted, but celebrated, and all students feel free from bullying and harassment.

WMS welcomes students...

- of all races, ethnicities, and nationalities
- with diverse abilities
- who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender
- of all family structures
- who are English language learners
- of all religions
- from all financial backgrounds
- of all body types

YOU!



The Civil Rights Team Project. In the News

No news this time around...

Advisors: do your best to get your teams *and* the Civil Rights Team Project some press!



From the Office:

New Teams!

Are you ready for this? We've got:

- A new elementary crt at Enfield Station School
- A new middle level affiliate at Mt. Ararat Middle School
- New middle level crt's at Auburn Middle School, Indian Island School, Tremont Consolidated School, and the Vinalhaven School
- New high school crt's at Cape Elizabeth High School, Fort Kent Community High School, and Portland High School



This puts our most updated count at 121 full-fledged civil rights teams and 20 affiliated groups, for a total of 141 participating schools. (And that number is just our confirmed number, as we are still waiting to hear back from some schools.)

Advisor Trainings

More than 200 people attended our four advisor training sessions in Augusta, Brewer, Portland, and Presque Isle. Many of you have completed the online feedback survey.

Here's the "executive summary" of your input:

1. Those who had the opportunity to meet in small groups with other advisors really valued that time together. We're already working on ways to make this happen more frequently.
2. I should write more rhyming poetry...
3. The TED talk "Embrace the Shake" by Phil Hansen is brilliant.
4. You are happy with the overall quality of these trainings. Asked to rate the overall quality you said:
 - Poor, 0%
 - Adequate, 1%
 - Good, 11%
 - Very Good, 49%
 - Excellent, 39%



- 5. Most of you (73.5%) agree that these trainings are “very important” in preparing you for your role as CRTP advisors in the upcoming school year.

The Student Trainings

The student trainings are just weeks away! Our first session is on October 25, and we don't stop until November 21, doing twelve full days of training.

Our #1 goal for the student trainings this year: increase student engagement. Every year you communicate the need for more movement, activities, and interaction between students from different schools. Your students will get all of that (and much, much more) at this year's trainings.

To accomplish this, though, we feel the need to limit the size of the trainings, which means limiting the number of students you can bring from your team. Full-fledged civil rights teams can bring 18 students, provided that they have two adults with them. With one adult, they can bring 9 students. Affiliate groups can bring 6 students. I realize that this is forcing some of you into making some difficult decisions, but we feel it's necessary to improve the overall quality of the trainings.

Registration information has already gone out through e-mail. You'll get it again soon. It includes your assigned date, times, specific locations, and instructions for registering you and your students.

Please respect our registration process and deadlines. We won't be in the office much once the trainings start, and timely and accurate information is important for our organization.

And for the record, the dates and deadlines are...

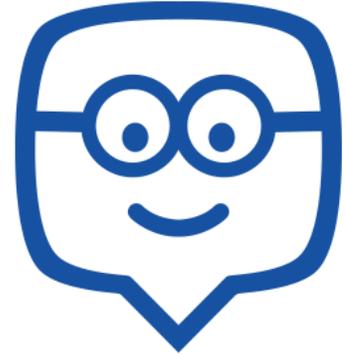
Training Session	Registration Deadline	Training Date
Farmington: ES	10/17	10/25
Portland: ES	10/18	10/28
Portland: MS/HS (1)	10/18	10/30
Portland: MS/HS (2)	10/18	10/31
Brewer: MS/HS (1)	10/25	11/4
Brewer: MS/HS (2)	10/25	11/5
Brewer: ES	10/25	11/6
Farmington: MS/HS	10/31	11/8
Augusta: ES	10/31	11/12
Augusta: MS/HS (1)	10/31	11/14
Augusta: MS/HS (2)	10/31	11/15
Presque Isle: MS/HS	11/8	11/21



From Edmodo:

Most Viewed Content:

1. Gardiner Area High School's "Acceptance" video (44 views), [see it here](#)
2. Phillip Agnew's speech for the 50th Anniversary of the March on Washington (36 views), [see it here](#)
3. Lori Duron's article "Sending My Rainbow Boy Back to School" (32 views), [see it here](#)



My Take: The Edmodo site is gaining traction! The site has been up since January, and these three postings are our most viewed content ever. Also, if you want your team to get noticed... *make a video*.

Creating a Network

Some big and exciting news: we have secured permissions from the Powers That Be to open up the Edmodo group so that you can post content and communicate with other advisors. The CRTP community we've always envisioned is just a few steps away!

But before we get too excited and just open everything up... there are a few things you should know. Everything and anything that you post to the Civil Rights Team Project group on Edmodo is:

- under the auspices of the Civil Rights Team Project (i.e. *our* responsibility);
- subject to the rules and restrictions of state government; and
- part of the public record.

This sounds more horrifying and limiting than it really is. We have created terms and conditions that you must agree to before we grant you posting powers on the Edmodo site. Here is the simplified version:

Posting Guidelines

1. Keep it professional
2. Respect privacy and confidentiality: no names or pics w/o consent
3. All postings = public record
4. Uphold your responsibility to follow school policies
5. All posts require administrator approval



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You'll get a slightly longer version of these guidelines soon, as well as information about posting on Edmodo and the creation of a true Civil Rights Team Project community online.

Look for it!

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