



October 9, 2020: A Friday Note

Dear CDS Community,

Over the summer CDS explored how to deepen our anti-racist work in a number of ways. We met in affinity groups, had open sessions where colleagues shared their experiences, and talked about our past work and our hopes for it to continue as a deeply embedded part of our community experience.

A few things came out of this work: [a statement](#) crafted by a group of employees this summer, the engagement of [Dr. Manya Whitaker](#) to facilitate an audit of our practices, the reaffirmation and expansion of our Board Committee on Equity and Inclusion, the unpacking of the principles of white supremacy we might not even be aware of in our day-to-day lives, the exploration of bias and how it impacts decision making, and the commitment to elevate diverse perspectives and voices.

Today in the assembly, you saw a powerful example of our commitment to diverse voices and I am deeply grateful to Patricia, Josephine, Angelique, Maria, Quetzalli, and Malintéotl for sharing such a beautiful context in honoring Indigenous Peoples' Day.

I have had to unlearn the education of my past about the stories, history, and lack of authentic representation of Indigenous voices. Today, we saw how Indigenous voices in our community and beyond can offer all of us an opportunity to see new perspectives and realize that what we see in the mirror each day is only our own reflection. We must intentionally work to understand and seek out the perspectives of others in our daily lives.

This morning's assembly had two specific calls to action. The first was posed by students about enacting our right to vote and being informed. You can find out more about their work on their [website](#). The second call presents an opportunity to reflect on why we are not in school on Monday. We have elected to honor this day as Indigenous Peoples' Day. Are there ways you can look to learn about our modern Indigenous people? Patricia offered a few resources to get you started:

- [Urban Native Era](#)
- [This Land podcast: “Who Owns Oklahoma?”](#)
- [No Wall – Tohono O’odham Nation](#)
- [K'É Infoshop](#)

We are hosting another celebration of Indigenous voices on Tuesday evening at 6 pm, as you have seen on ParentSquare. This is designed to support conversations and awareness of the struggle and success of modern Indigenous folks.

Just within the CDS community, there are more than a thousand perspectives at play at any time, and this offers us amazing opportunities for learning and connection. It also allows us to make mistakes and step into our own silo of awareness. Together, I do believe that this community has the capacity to authentically engage and connect in this way. It is not always going to be pretty, but the process will make us all stronger and is part of the mending of our frayed edges.

Enjoy the long weekend.

Warmly,
Shelly