

History and Social Studies Department Newsletter

June 2022

Cambridge Public Schools

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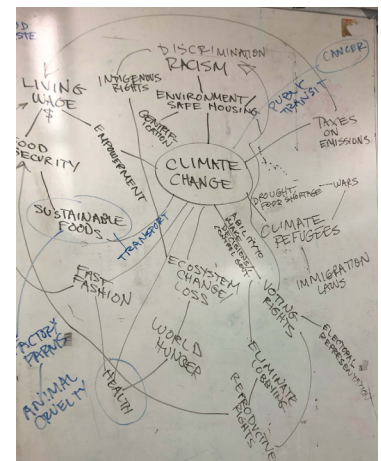
Civic Engagement in CPS Classrooms

Students throughout the Cambridge Public Schools engaged in a wide range of civic engagement projects this year.

All eighth graders developed student-led civic engagement projects. Amigos students created interdisciplinary projects under the guidance of **Michael Batt** (civics), **Laurie Ferhani** (science), and **Ginamari Martinez Jimenez** (art). They researched climate change and its impact on health, industry, food and animal habitats. Students wrote letters to community leaders to share their findings and to take civic action. Students shared their work with the community at an exhibition in June.

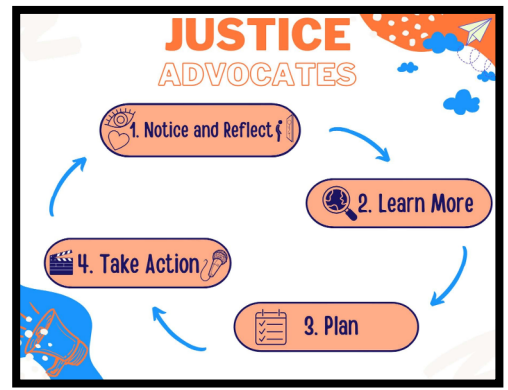


CPS high school teachers joined colleagues from Somerville High School to engage in professional learning with the **Democratic Knowledge Project (DKP)** around best practices for facilitating student led civic engagement projects. The participants were **Caroline Berz** (CRLS History), **Ibrahim Dangher** (HSEP), **Barbara Dorritie** (CRLS Science), **Sharon Lozado** (CRLS History), **Andy Minihan** (HSEP History), and **Rachel**



Mind map from Barbara Dorritie's science class.

Williams-Giordano (CRLS History). This opportunity was organized by CRLS civics teacher **Kathleen Fitzgerald** and Coordinator **Adrienne Stang**. Thanks to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for funding this.

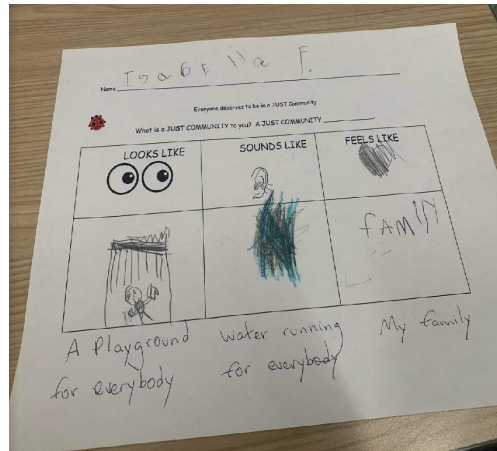


Children Discovering Justice civic engagement strategy.

Kindergarten and 2nd grade teachers at the King Open experimented with updated **Children Discovering Justice** (CDJ) modules. Kindergarten teacher **Fabiane Noronha** (King Open) invited **Amanda Rivera** from CPS Food & Nutrition Services to her class to be interviewed by students and to share her perspective on food justice. Students wrote letters to the food service staff to advocate for a salad bar at the King Open. Their advocacy worked, and the salad bar will return in the fall!



Amanda Rivera with Fabiane Noronha's kindergarten students.



Fabiane's students wrote about what justice looks like, sounds like, and feels like. They also explored what a 'just community' means to them, using illustrations and words.



Fabiane was a co-facilitator at the Massachusetts Civic Learning Coalition webinar this spring and was honored at the Children Discovering Justice Gala this June for her commitment to civic engagement in the classroom.

Tom Trainor, 8th grade civics teacher at RAUC, was profiled in "**Teaching Civics After January 6th**" in US News and World Report earlier this year.

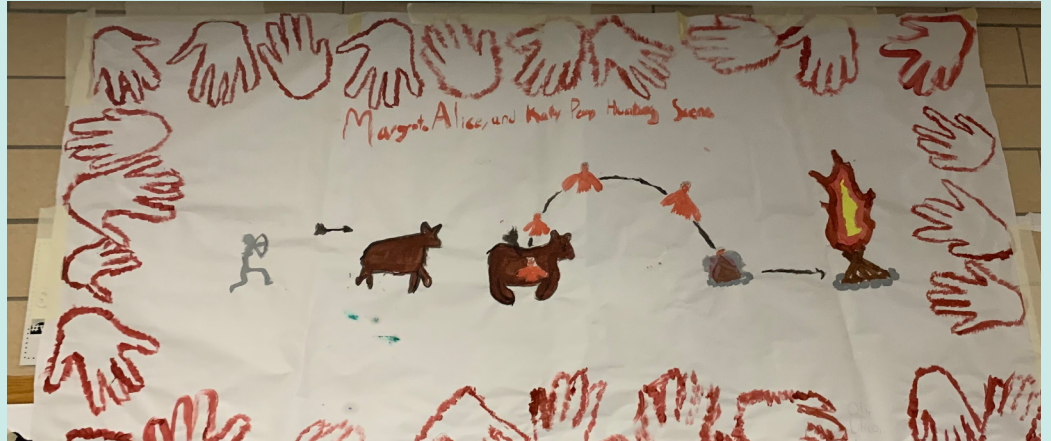
Congratulations, Fabiane, Tom, & CRLS history teacher **Benji Cohen**, who won a Friends of CRLS Faculty Distinction Award from the Class of 2022!



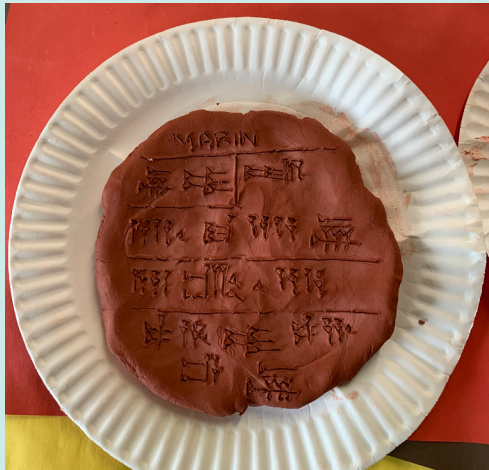
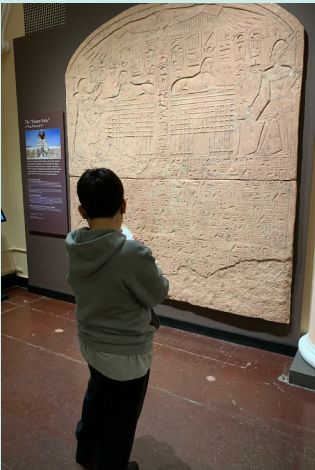
Fabiane Noronha at the Children Discovering Justice gala. Photo courtesy of Discovering Justice.

Sixth Grade Partnership with the Peabody Museum

Sixth grade students continue to benefit from the ongoing partnership between CPS and the Peabody Museum of Natural History at Harvard. This year students participated in virtual visits with social scientists, field trips to the Museum of the Ancient Near East, and exploration of artifacts demonstrating the transition from foraging to farming. Thanks to HSS Coach **Sarah Novogrodsky** for facilitating this partnership!

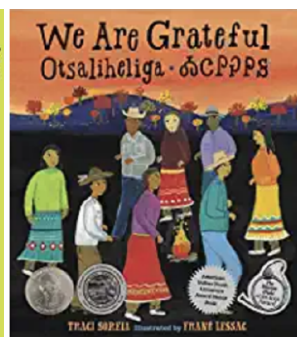


Experiential learning with "cave paintings." Sixth graders explored the origin of artistic expression in prehistoric societies.



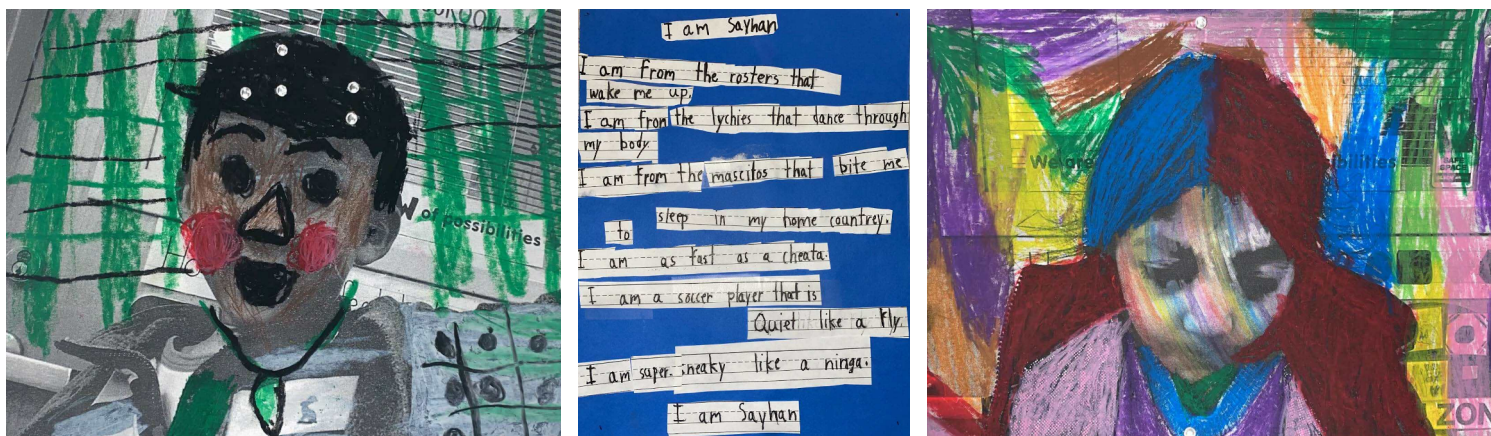
Elementary Updates

This spring, the HSS department made purchases to support grade 1 and 2 curriculum. All first grade classrooms now have *See the World* student atlases, laminated neighborhood maps, and new read alouds to support the "Communities in the Americas" unit. Second grade



classrooms have laminated United States and world maps to supplement the National Geographic atlases which were purchased prior to the pandemic. Thanks to coach **Allison DiDomenico** for researching these purchases and obtaining teacher feedback.

This spring, a group of first grade educators spent two days collaborating to improve the first eight weeks of first grade social studies. The curriculum team included **Amy Moylan** (Baldwin), **Caitlin O'Donnell** (FMA), **Christina Brumbach** (King), **Gena Rosenberg** (Morse), **Inbal Alon** (G&P), **Kat Callard** (Cambridgeport), **Yazmin Navarro** (FMA). They were joined by literacy coaches **Nathalie Ais** (Kennedy-Longfellow), **Abi Frost** (Cambridgeport), and **Summer Thompson** (Baldwin), librarian **Lynn Van Auken** (Cambridgeport), **Alice Cohen** (SEL), **Emily Bryan & Kathy Simpson** (ELA), and **Adrienne Stang & Allison DiDomenico** (HSS). The efforts of this interdisciplinary team resulted in a revamped "Communities, Identities, and Diversity" unit, with strong SEL and literacy components. This new unit incorporates self portraits; see below for examples.



At the Martin Luther King School, **Christina Brumbach's** first grade students wrote identity poems to accompany their self portraits inspired by Andy Warhol's art.



Inbal Alon's (Graham and Parks School) first graders finished their identity and diversity unit by creating self portraits. They studied various artists for inspiration.

Partnership with the Democratic Knowledge Project

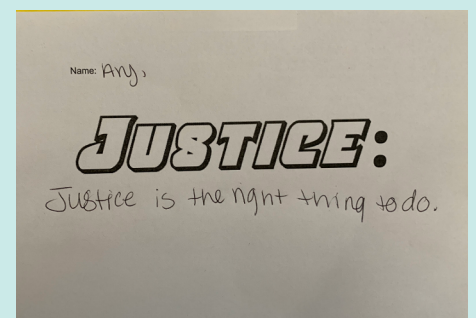
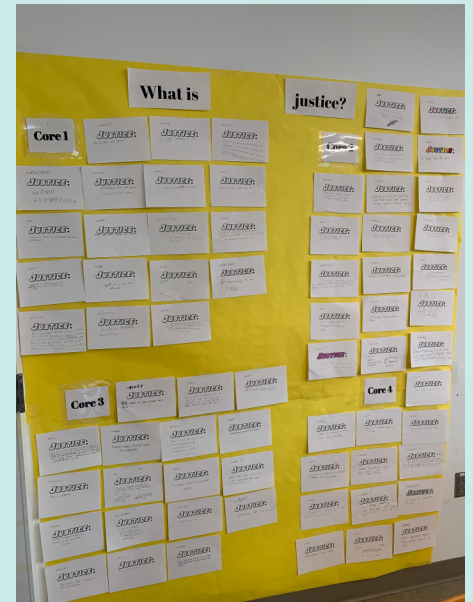
2021-22 marks the fourth year of the department's partnership with the **Democratic Knowledge Project (DKP)** at Harvard University's Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics. The partnership was originally established to create a new **8th grade civics course**. This curriculum has been **recognized by DESE** for its high quality, and was one of only four core civics curriculum materials of nearly 100 reviewed that met DESE's expectations.

The CPS-DKP partnership has expanded to include new units for grades 5-7. This year the 6th grade teachers worked with DKP Research Assistant **Michelle Bentsman** to build a Project Based Learning (PBL) unit, "Comparing World Religions: Hindu and Jewish Traditions," which was piloted this spring. Sixth graders grappled with these questions:

- How do beliefs and practices shape society?
- How do Hinduism and Judaism show us why where matters?
- How can religions help us to imagine a more just world?



Sixth grade teachers **Adaline Lining** (VLUS), **Abigail Ducat** (PAUS), **Stephen Rodenas** (Amigos), and **Gisel Saillant** (RAUC) [left to right] at a curriculum development workshop with **Adrienne Bock** and **Michelle Bentsman** of the DKP [foreground, left to right].



At Putnam Avenue Upper School, **Abigail Ducat's** sixth graders brainstormed about justice to launch the new unit.

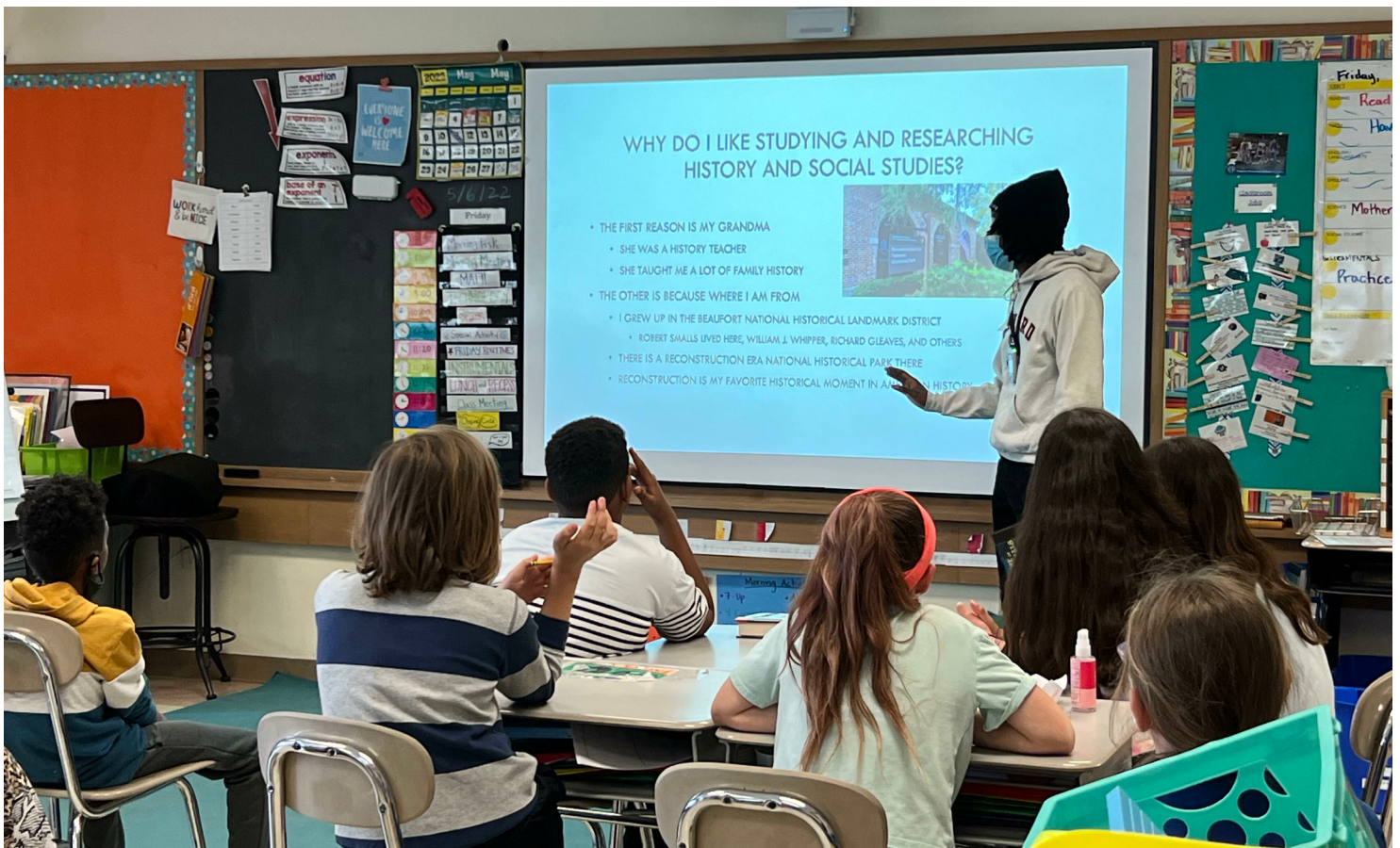
Thank you to this year's social studies team leaders:

- **Sarah Novogrodsky** (6th grade)
- **Emily Petrow** (7th grade, PAUS)
- **Michael Batt** (8th grade, Amigos)
- **Amina Sheikh & Caroline Berz** (9th grade, CRLS)
- **Duncan MacLaury** (10th grade, CRLS)!

Publications by History and Social Studies Educators

CRLS teacher **Cindy Weisbart** co-authored "Cross-Age Peer Mentoring in a Low-Income Rural Community: A 20-year Retrospective on a School-Community Partnership," with Dr. Donna San Antonio and Jeff Martel. You can read her piece in [All About Mentoring](#) (Issue 55, Autumn 2021) published by SUNY Empire State College.

Curriculum Coordinator **Adrienne Stang** and CPS parent **Professor Danielle Allen** published "[Truth and Empowerment: A Framework for Teaching about Enslavement](#)," in Education Next. The CPS 5th grade curriculum referenced in the article, "Expanding Liberty, Equality, and the Suffrage, 1776-1924," is available on the [Democratic Knowledge Project website](#) and is part of the [Educating for American Democracy](#) resources for teachers.



This spring, **Willie Webb** visited several fifth grade classrooms, include **Elise Faucher's** (Haggerty) to share his work co-authoring a set of abolitionist biographies for "Expanding Liberty, Equality and the Suffrage." Willie is a PhD candidate in Government and Political Theory at Harvard and a research assistant for the Democratic Knowledge Project.

Thank you Cambridge Public Schools educators for all of your hard work this year!

Have a wonderful summer!