

# Milton Public Schools

April 15th, 2021

Behaving  
Equitably

## Black Lives MATTER!



On Sunday, April 11th, 2021, a 20 year old young black father, Daunte Wright, was shot and killed in a traffic stop. The [New York Times reported](#), "The officer who fatally shot a Black man during a traffic stop near [Minneapolis](#) mistakenly confused her gun for her [Taser](#), police officials said on Monday, quickly releasing video as they tried to ease tensions in a state on edge over the [Derek Chauvin trial](#)." Daunte Wright's son, Daunte Wright Jr. is almost 2 years old. The officer who took the fatal shot named Kim Potter has 26 years of experience on the job. The police chief Tim Gannon stated, "officers pulled Mr. Wright over on Sunday afternoon for a traffic violation related to expired registration tags. Officers

then discovered that he had a warrant for his arrest." He also stated that he believed Officer Kim Potters intended to deploy her taser and not her gun. On April 14th at 11:30am Kim Potter was taken into custody and charged with [2nd Degree Manslaughter](#).

On December 5, 2020, LT Nazario who identifies as Black and Latino was stopped by two police officers. [U.S. News](#) reported "The Army's top enlisted soldier (Sgt. Maj.) on Monday denounced an incident last December in which two police officers in Virginia pulled their guns on a Black and Latino lieutenant and pepper-sprayed him during a traffic stop – and he tied it to the military's broader efforts to address endemic racism and extremism in its ranks." Upon seeing the sirens flare, LT Nazario did not stop his vehicle (drove for an additional 2 minutes with his emergency blinkers on) until he found a well-lit safe location to pull over. This is something I teach my children to do as they are half black and Cambodian. In the [body cam footage](#), you can see that LT Nazario was following the directions of the officer named Joe Gutierrez. LT. Nazario had two guns drawn on him and pepper sprayed as he attempted to follow directions and ask what he was being pulled over for. LT. Nazario filed a one-million-dollar lawsuit against the Norfolk, VA police department. Officer Gutierrez has been fired after an investigation was conducted.

These are just two new additions to a long series of Black and Brown citizens who encounter police officers doing everyday things. Unfortunately, in many Black families that I know, we [purposefully and explicitly discuss](#) how to respond if and when you encounter a police officer.

Author David Grey wrote:

*I need to drive my two-year-old to daycare tomorrow morning. To ensure we arrive alive, we won't take public transit (Oscar Grant). I removed all air fresheners from the vehicle and double-checked my registration status (Daunte Wright), and ensured my license plates were visible (Lt. Caron Nazario). I will be careful to follow all traffic rules (Philando Castille), signal every turn (Sandra Bland), keep the*

*radio volume low (Jordan Davis), and won't stop at a fast food chain for a meal (Rayshard Brooks). I'm too afraid to pray (Rev. Clementa C. Pickney) so I just hope the car won't break down (Corey Jones).*

*When my wife picks him up at the end of the day, I'll remind her not to dance (Elijah McClain), stop to play in a park (Tamir Rice), patronize the local convenience store for snacks (Trayvon Martin), or walk around the neighborhood (Mike Brown). Once they are home, we won't stand in our backyard (Stephon Clark), eat ice cream on the couch (Botham Jean), or play any video games (Atatiana Jefferson).*

*After my wife and I tuck him into bed around 7:30pm, neither of us will leave the house to go to Walmart (John Crawford) or to the gym (Tshyrand Oates) or on a jog (Ahmaud Arbery). We won't even walk to see the birds (Christian Cooper). We'll just sit and try not to breathe (George Floyd) and not to sleep (Breonna Taylor)."*

*These are things white people simply do not have to think about."*

Statistically black Americans are being killed at a higher rate. [Statista.com](https://www.statista.com) reported "In 2020, there were 1,021 fatal police shootings, and in 2019 there were 999 fatal shootings. Additionally, the [rate of fatal police shootings](#) among Black Americans was much higher than that for any other ethnicity, standing at 35 fatal shootings per million of the population as of March 2021." **Although there has been much debate on why that is, it doesn't change the fact that IT IS. This must change because Black LIVES MATTER!**

The Milton Public School knows that these issues are present and current. It has a huge impact on our learners (especially our BIPOC learners - students and staff) and their families. These national events inflict trauma on all of us. We know that the impact and need for support may be different for each individual, families, and groups. We want to make it clear that the social-emotional needs and addressing trauma of our learners and staff is very important and at the forefront of our decisions. Although we have been working to improve our capacity to discuss race, oppression, inclusion, trauma, and diversity from an equity and restorative lens, we still have much work to do. However, each school has support systems (individuals who have been trained and practicing trauma informed response) in place to provide a safe space for learners to process the impacts of these events. If there are any concerns and/or questions please feel free to reach out to your principal for support. If you have any resources you would like to share and think our community can benefit and learn from please send them to [sprak-martins@miltonps.org](mailto:sprak-martins@miltonps.org).

Some resources that may help:

- [Youth.Gov](https://www.youth.gov)
- [Communities healing from police violence](#)
- [Trauma Informed Care](#)
- [Trauma informed and responsive](#)
- [Center of Hope Foundation](#)



## Ramadan

***Special Thanks for Tahra Goraya for the piece.*** Tahra Goraya is the first Muslim American woman who wears hijab elected in Milton. She is Town Meeting Member in Precinct 6, founder of Milton Muslim Neighbors (MMN), a member of Milton Interfaith Clergy Association (MICA), and President of Goraya Consulting. Tahra lives with her husband Sam and daughters Noor and Sofia in East Milton.

**Ramadan is a special time of year for Muslims. This is what it means to your Muslim neighbors.**

[What is Ramadan Video](#)  
[What is Ramadan Part 2](#)



Ramadan is the holiest month for Muslims. It is the ninth month in the Islamic lunar calendar. This year, Muslims in Milton and around the world will be celebrating this month starting the evening of April 12th through May 12th.

Every year, Muslims around the world look forward to this important time to develop a closer relationship with God, to reflect, to think about those who are less fortunate, and train themselves on patience, gratitude, forgiveness, and practice charitable giving.

### What is Ramadan?

It's an important time for Muslims because they believe that the Quran (Holy Book) was revealed to mankind through Prophet Muhammad in Ramadan.

Muslims fast each day during the month of Ramadan from dawn until dusk. Specifically, that means abstaining from drinking, eating, intimacy, immoral acts and anger during the daylight hours each day. Charitable giving, helping the needy, and increased prayers, are highly encouraged during this month.

During the holy month, Muslims wake up early to eat *suhoor* – a pre-dawn meal. They break their fast with a meal referred to as *iftar*.

### Why do Muslims fast during Ramadan?



Fasting is one of the five pillars of Islam, prescribed for healthy Muslims adults in the Quran. There is a wide array of exemptions for fasting including travel, pregnancy, breastfeeding, menstruation, and serious medical illness.

Much like the Judaic and Christian fasting traditions, Muslims fast as an act of worship. Ramadan offers an opportunity to become more compassionate to those in need and a way to connect with humanity. Fasting is also seen to practice patience, curb anger, forgive, and break bad habits.

### **What are Ramadan customs?**

Muslims greet each other with “Ramadan Mubarak or Ramadan Kareem” which means “Happy Ramadan”. It is common for mosques to host large iftars, especially for the poor and needy regardless of their faiths. Special nightly prayers called Tarawih are also held in mosques after iftar.

Different cultures have different traditions during Ramadan like preparing special foods and delicacies. Islamic tenets of generosity however inspires people to open their homes to share their food with others, breakfast and offer communal prayers. All around the world, one observes the similar thread of sharing and community with unique cultural twists.

### **When is Ramadan this year?**

The Islamic calendar is based on the lunar, so its date occurs 11 or 12 days earlier on the Gregorian calendar each year. Muslims tend to wait for the new month's moon to appear before the announcement of the first day of Ramadan. However, they can still estimate the day beforehand. This year Ramadan begins on the evening of April 11<sup>th</sup>.

### **How long is Ramadan and when does it end?**

Lunar months last between 29 to 30 days depending on when the new moon is sighted. If the moon is not seen on the night of the 29th day, then Ramadan lasts for the full 30 days.

The Eid al-Fitr celebration marks the end of the month when Muslims celebrate a successful Ramadan of fasting and worship. When translated, Eid al-Fitr means “festival of breaking the fast”. Traditionally Eid is celebrated for three days and is an official holiday in Muslim-majority countries. While the US does not observe Eid nationally with any closures, many employers and local school districts allow time off.

Muslims gather at the mosque or at the park for a communal morning prayer and wish each other ‘Eid Mubarak’, ‘Eid Kareem’, ‘Happy Eid’ which all mean ‘Blessed Eid’. The day is often spent with family and friends, exchanging gifts, and offering charity.

The Eid prayer is performed in congregation in open areas like parks, community centers or at mosques followed by visiting family and friends, offering charity, and wishing one another ‘Eid Mubarak’, ‘Eid Kareem’, ‘Happy Eid’ which all mean ‘Blessed Eid’. Eid is a time when Muslims pledge their gratitude to God by donating to various philanthropic efforts. Ramadan is like a spiritual reboot and it is also a goal to continue the good deeds and good habits learned after Ramadan and Eid celebrations have ended.

### **How will Ramadan be celebrated this year?**

The COVID-19 global pandemic certainly changed the way Muslims practice Ramadan. Ramadan 2020 saw greater individual introspection due to the forced isolation. Gone were the fast breaking with relatives and friends at home or at the mosque. People created community via Zoom with virtual fast breaking, sermons, prayers, and spiritual discussions. Getting food, financial aid, or Eid toys to that hardest hit became difficult as communities shut down. Although mosques will not be open full time this year, communities have learned to adapt congregational prayers with advanced reservations and limited numbers allowed inside. With more

people vaccinated, small groups and families will begin breaking fasts together. However large-scale events will still not take place yet.

In Milton, the Milton Muslim Neighbors will join with Milton Interfaith Clergy Association and Milton Public Schools for a food drive. If you would like to join, please drop off canned goods at one of the MPS schools between April 26<sup>th</sup> through May 10<sup>th</sup> 2021. **There will be bins placed at each school location. Please reach out to your principal for the location as it will be different depending on safety protocols for each school.**

### Resources

- <https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/ramadan>
- <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1DTtfCsldstQBZO2g1vUTWw5EQ7PuneBG/view?usp=sharing>

### Books

- *The Gift of Ramadan* by Rabiah York Lumbard
- *Lailah's Lunchbox: A Ramadan Story* by Reem Faruqi
- *Ramadan Around the World*
- *Tell Me More About Ramadan* by Bachar Karroum
- *It's Ramadan, Curious George* by H.A. Rey
- *Under the Ramadan Moon* by Sylvia Whitman
- *My First Ramadan* by Karen Katz
- *Night of the Moon: A Muslim Holiday Story* by Hena Khan
- *Ramadan Celebrate the World* by Hannah Eliot
- *Golden Domes and Silver Lanterns* by Hena Khan

## Equity Work

The Milton Public School District has been hard at work with practicing equity.

### Here are a few things that are happening:

- **Pierce DEI Committee Invitation:** Early in the winter, the Pierce diversity, equity and inclusion committee held several “family forums” as opportunities to bring parents and guardians together around their children’s experiences with school up to that point in the school year. In response to the ideas and opportunities that emerged from the family forums, we are pleased to invite all MPS parents, guardians and caregivers to attend several virtual workshops on a variety of topics. Each workshop will be facilitated by a panel of professionals with a broad range of experience and expertise in supporting families, children, and educators. Please click [here](#) for details about each workshop as well as registration information.
  - **Workshop #1 - Parenting During a Pandemic: Where do we go from here? (4/29/21)**
  - **Workshop #2 - Healing Racial Trauma: Self-Care for Mind, Body and Spirit (5/12/21)**
  - Here is a link directly to the document with all of the details.  
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wJArYfAn3QBwXI444XCrjYs0WlFq5JPv3uAUMjo-3Bg/edit>
- All elementary schools and with Pierce Middle School faculty are working collaboratively to identify opportunities to successfully transition students. The Elementary/Pierce Mentoring Project is designed to connect students who identify as BIPOC and API in the fifth grade across the district with mentors who are members of the Mosaic Club, Pierce Middle School's BIPOC student affinity group. Our

seventh grade mentors have participated in a virtual training provided by the Boston-based social justice and activism organization, Wee the People (<https://www.weethepeopleboston.org/>) in preparation for this mentoring project. The program is a social justice enrichment program for Milton youth and is intended to bring together a group of young people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds to build community through exploring identity and social justice issues. This program will also help to support fifth graders' transition to Pierce in the fall and provide them valuable opportunities to connect across all four elementary schools to form relationships and bonds that will sustain them through the transition and beyond. Mentors and mentees will be meeting four times between now and the end of the year, with sessions facilitated by our trained seventh graders and supported by MPS elementary and Pierce staff. This project was the brainchild of MPS parent, Meg Matthews, and funded by a generous Celebrate Milton Grant. It is our collective hope that this structure can be expanded and grown to support MPS students for years to come.

- The MPS Athletic department: the coaches at Milton High School have met to discuss our plan for Athletics going forward. While the overall consensus that each student-athlete should have a positive athletic experience, there is work to be done to learn more about what that means for one student vs another.
  - Initial discussion around equity in athletics was held on Monday, April 5th.
  - A Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) has been formed. Student-athletes from each grade, with varying sports and backgrounds will serve as the voice of nearly 700 student-athletes at Milton High School.
  - The students on SAAC will dive into our Athletics Philosophy and Mission and ensure that it accurately reflects the behaviors of our students and coaches.
  - Coaches interested in serving on this committee will work to create initiatives to increase accessibility at not only the Pierce and High School, but youth programs as well.
  - After the committee has done this work, we will create focus groups with parents.
  - Our coaches have begun working with Paul DiManno, Parks and Rec Director, to offer scholarships to students for youth sports camps.
  - We are slowly collecting used equipment for students that may not be able to afford equipment when they get to the high school.
  - We are working to better communicate 504 and IEP information to coaches should student-athletes need accommodations for sports as well.



#### **Professional Development offered to the staff:**

- **Education Now: Understanding our Commitment to Anti-Racism** Amid pandemic losses and continuing shocks of racist violence, one legacy of this year's trauma is a greater willingness on the part of many to take stock of their own role in perpetuating or responding to racism. Schools and communities have a key part to play in this necessary accounting, and for many educators and parents, the work is central and non-negotiable. Join us for a conversation in which we explore our commitment to anti-racism — and how the events of this past year have deepened our understanding of those commitments. We'll share insight, inspiration, and actionable ideas for how schools, parents, and school leaders can work — from their individual roles, and collectively — to confront racism in our society and our schools. How can our own commitments help to empower communities — and the young people we are raising and educating?



- [Introduction to Data Wise](#): A Collaborative Process to Improve Learning & Teaching: Based on the book [Data Wise: A Step-by-Step Guide to Using Assessment Results to Improve Teaching and Learning](#), this course describes a clear, 8-step process for using a wide range of data sources to improve instruction. You will see what this disciplined way of working with colleagues can look and feel like in a school setting. You will also have the opportunity to share insights and experiences about school improvement with educators from around the world.
  - What participants will learn
    - Understand what the Data Wise Improvement Process is and how it can help you improve teaching and learning
    - Build skills in looking at a wide range of data sources, including test scores, student work, and teaching practice
    - Identify next steps in supporting a culture of collaborative data inquiry in your setting
    - Understand what the Data Wise Improvement Process is and how it can help you improve teaching and learning

## Quality Review

**Superintendent Jette and school principals sent out communication about the process, progress, and the next phase of the quality review last week. If you did not receive the communication please reach out to your school principals.**

Meanwhile if you are interested in participating here are some ways in which you can participate.

As a community member, you can participate in the Quality Review with an Equity Lens by providing your feedback through surveys and focus groups. The information gathered from the surveys and focus groups will help formulate a picture of the districts work, behaviors, and practices. The more responses we can get from the community we serve, the clearer the picture can become. **ALL participation is optional, anonymous and confidential!**

### **Parent, Guardian, and Support System Surveys**

If you are interested and did not receive a link to complete the survey please click on (or copy and paste into browser) the link: <http://milton-parents-survey.cedu.io>

### **Focus Groups**

The deadline for this was April 13th, 2021.

### **ALL participation is OPTIONAL**

If you do not want your child to participate in surveys, virtual observations, or focus groups with the review team, please notify **your child's principal** by **April, 21st, 2021.**

### **Steering Committee and Selection Task Force**

We are currently searching for constituents who would like to serve on the Quality Review Steering Committee and the Selection Task Force.

**Steering Committee and how to apply:**

The MPS Quality Review Steering Committee is a community-based WORKING committee whose purpose is to support the MPS to work purposefully towards building sustainable equitable practices for ALL Learners. The Steering Committee will work to ensure that the process meaningfully involves diverse stakeholders and the alignment of the MPS strategic plan reflects equity, community values, mission, and priorities. Please click on the link to learn more about the [Steering Committee and how to apply to be a member.](#)

**Languages Available**

Click the link below

[Portuguese Application](#)

[Haitian Creole Application](#)

[Vietnamese Application](#)

[Spanish Application](#)

**Selection Task Force and how to apply:**

In order to ensure equity is baked into the process, we are also doing an all call for the Selection Task force. The Milton Public Schools Equity Department is looking for individuals who would like to be part of a team to assist in the selection of the Quality Review Steering Committee. This group will be charged with reviewing applications, interviewing, and vetting candidates for the [Quality Review Steering Committee](#). If you are interested in serving on this selection team, please fill out [this form](#). We are looking to have 9-11 people on this selection committee who will use a [rubric](#) (link) to guide the selection of candidates for inclusion. The total commitment will be about ten hours over the next several weeks. If you plan on applying for a position on the Steering Committee, you cannot be on the selection team. However, this is a great way to contribute to the Quality Review process if you are not able to make the time commitment required of the Steering Committee.

ALL CALL	Selection Task force 2/8/21 - 4/16/21 Steering Committee 2/8/21 - 5/7/21
Application review	5/10/21 - 5/14/21
Interviews	5/17/21 - 5/21/21
Call Backs	5/24/21 - 5/28/21
Orientation	TBD
Work begins	6/7/21

