

# Milton Public Schools

June 3rd, 2021

## Behaving Equitably

### EQUAL RIGHTS FOR ALL

#### Memorial Day and It's Origins

**On May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021, the nation celebrated Memorial Day. It is a day where we celebrate the fallen soldiers who died to defend our freedom.** Frederick Douglas believed this so much that he dedicated his life and convinced African Americans to fight for the union states. He believed that those who showed their upmost loyalty to this country (by enlisting in the fight and possibly give their lives for it) would prove that they too deserve the protection of the Constitution of United States of America.

Last month, I wrote about what some historians considered to be the birth of Memorial Day. Although there were many debates about who started the act of Memorial Day, "Historians like the Pulitzer Prize winner [David Blight](#) have tried to raise awareness of freed slaves who decorated soldiers' graves a year earlier, to make sure their story gets told too (time.com)."

Here is another story that has been left out of our k-12 history books. In David Blights book [Race and Reunion](#), this celebration first occurred on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1865.



"About 10,000 people, mostly black residents, participated in the May 1 tribute, according to coverage back then in the *Charleston Daily Courier* and the *New York Tribune*. Starting at 9 a.m., about 3,000 black schoolchildren paraded around the race track holding roses and singing the Union song "[John Brown's Body](#)," and were followed by adults representing aid societies for freed black men and women. Black pastors delivered sermons and led attendees in prayer and in the singing of spirituals, and there were picnics. James Redpath, the white

director of freedman's education in the region, organized about 30 speeches by Union officers, missionaries and black ministers. Participants sang patriotic songs like "America" and "We'll Rally around the Flag" and "The Star-Spangled Banner." In the afternoon, three white and black Union regiments marched around the graves and staged a drill ([times.com](#))."

Our history has shown that we have and can stand together. **I wonder if the story of unity is what the system has been trying to hide?** America was made by the contributions of many ethnicities, race, religions, genders, and identities.

**In our pursuit to make the United States of America a great Nation for ALL, we shall not dismiss and/or forget those who have sacrificed and/or died to hold this country accountable to live by its mission.**

## Israel and Palestine

There is much happening in the world. Social Media has elevated so many stories of struggle, violence, harm, and trauma. I have shed many tears watching the death and annihilation of humans.

Unfortunately, these events can also incite violence and hate (right here in our own communities) on individuals and groups based on their identity(ies). This includes but not limited to race, religion, dress, gender, age, skin color, class, socio-economic status and beliefs. Islamophobia and anti-Semitism have been on the rise. The [New York Times](#) reported that “In the wake of clashes in Israel and Gaza, synagogues have been vandalized and Jews have been threatened and attacked.” In March of [2021 RNS reported](#) that, “A new report from the United Nations highlights growing Islamophobia and excessive surveillance of Muslims in countries around the world.”

It is highly recommended to conduct your own research. There is so much information out there. Please also be aware that if your child has social media, the algorithms of some of these apps may be sending your child pics and videos that can be disturbing and traumatizing. Many parents have reached out and shared this story. Please check in with your child and each other as these events causes trauma to those that are in the circle of influence as well as to those who are looking in. Check in on your neighbors!



If you and your child need support please reach out to your child’s principal. Each school has developed a process and protocol to support your child through these hard and traumatizing times. The Milton Public School District continues to work hard to provide ALL a safe space to process such trauma.

In addition, here are some local resources you can access:

- [JRI-Youth Trauma Program](#)
- [Riverside Trauma Center](#)
- [Trauma Resource Guide \(2017\)](#)

- [Massachusetts Child Trauma Project](#)
- [Justice and Social Action Resources](#) for hate and violent acts
- [CAIR Massachusetts](#)

**We condemn all forms of hate and violent acts towards anyone and/or any group based on their identity.** Let us hold ourselves accountable to stand in solidarity for equal rights for ALL people.

### JUNE is PRIDE Month



In a [Proclamation by President Biden](#), the President writes, “Pride is a time to recall the trials the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ+) community has endured and to rejoice in the triumphs of trailblazing individuals who have bravely fought — and continue to fight — for full equality. Pride is both a jubilant communal celebration of visibility and a personal celebration of self-worth and dignity. This Pride Month, we recognize the valuable contributions of LGBTQ+ individuals across America, and we reaffirm our commitment to standing in solidarity with LGBTQ+ Americans in their ongoing struggle against discrimination and injustice.”

On June 28, 1969, New York City Police raided Stonewall Inn, a gay club located in Greenwich Village in New York City. “The raid sparked a riot among bar patrons and neighborhood residents as police roughly hauled employees and patrons out of the bar, leading to six days of protests and violent clashes with law enforcement outside the bar on Christopher Street, in neighboring streets and in nearby Christopher Park. The Stonewall Riots served as a catalyst for the [gay rights movement](#) in the United States and around the world ([History.com](#)).”

**See the complete list of historical events on [LGBTQhistory.org](#).**

If you checked out the complete timeline on LGBTQhistory.org, the intersectionality of the civil rights and the LGBTQ+ movement cannot be denied. The study, titled “Equality and Equity: Advancing the LGBT Community in Massachusetts, ‘took a deep dive into Massachusetts’ LGBT history, policies, and demographics to better understand the population today. The study reported, “Nearly half of lesbian, gay, or bisexual youth in Massachusetts have considered taking their own lives, as compared to 11 percent of their non-LGB peers. LGBTQ youth of color, in particular, face “widespread discrimination” because they are “at the intersection of multiple identities that are often marginalized,” the researchers found. A significant share of these youth live with homelessness, food insecurity, and unemployment across Massachusetts ([Boston Magazine](#)).” These numbers are right here in this state. We cannot deny that this population

exist and we cannot deny the hurt and struggles they are experiencing in the community. Although this is the reality of Massachusetts, the report ended on a good note stating that even though Massachusetts has a long way to go, the Bay State is home to a robust network of advocacy, wide range of supports, and has the most cutting-edge and pro-LGBTQ+ policies and resources.

To get involved here are some resources listed on [youth.gov](https://youth.gov):

- The White House is holding an [LGBT Pride Month Champions of Change Video Challenge](#) to explore the stories of unsung heroes and local leaders who are leading our march towards a more perfect union. In early June, you will have a chance to weigh in and help identify finalists that will be featured as Champions of Change at an event at the White House!
- Take a look at [resources](#) from the Administration on Children and Families' National Clearinghouse on Youth and Families. These resources are geared towards helping youth-serving organizations understand and more effectively support lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning young people: [Serving Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning Youth With Open Arms](#).
- Pride events occur throughout the month. [Find a LGBT Pride event in your area \(link is external\)](#).
- Check out the [It Gets Better Project \(link is external\)](#). Take the pledge to speak up against hate and intolerance whenever and wherever you see it. Watch videos from folks who submitted "It gets better," or submit a video of your own.
- [DMH Resource guide for youth in MA](#)
- [Boston PRIDE](#)

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## Quality Review

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

The applicants went through a rigorous selection process to be part of this team. Here are the criteria used to select the Steering Committee members. The selection team has work tirelessly to put a diverse team together. The team has identified the first 5 members of the Steering Committee. Their names will be shared in the next newsletter.

I would like to thank everyone, on the selection task force, for your countless hours and dedication to learning, building knowledge, and cultivating relationships with each other. It was a joy to facilitate and learn with you all. The trust, honesty, and vulnerability we demonstrated during this process proves that a group of people with different backgrounds, skills, knowledge, and identities can come together and function in a way where we all can learn and thrive.

## Empathy

The Milton Public School District believes we all have the right to live authentically to oneself as long as it doesn't harm others. We encourage conversations to seek understanding and learn from one another.

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Empathy:  
“Let me  
hold the door for you.  
I may have  
never walked  
in your shoes,  
but I can see  
your soles are worn,  
your strength is torn  
under the weight of a story  
I have never lived before.  
Let me hold the door for you.  
After all you've walked through,  
It's the least I can do.”  
— MHN



Somaly Prak-Martins 2021