



Anti-Bias Anti-Racism (ABAR) PLAN 2020-21



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Introduction

St. Louis Public Schools recognizes that biases are inherent in our world. These can include biases for or against racial/ethnic backgrounds, culture, language, gender expression, sexual orientation, family structure, cognitive or physical ability, economic class, and religion. We recognize that every person—staff, parent, child—at SLPS experiences privilege and oppression differently. It is our duty as public educators to prepare our staff and environment to provide an inclusive space for every member of our community. SLPS is committed to taking a proactive approach to eliminating biases and/or racism in our environment. To that end, SLPS is committed to:

- ▶ Engage in ongoing ABAR training for all staff members.
- ▶ Recognize the biases and privilege that permeate our interactions with families, staff, and children.
- ▶ Support each other in understanding and dismantling our personal biases and privilege.
- ▶ Restructure our systems to eliminate barriers to accessing quality education.
- ▶ Incorporate lessons that teach how to acknowledge, honor, and celebrate our students, staff, and family differences.

Anti-bias/anti-racism work is ongoing due to the changing nature of our school community. It focuses on uplifting individuals to be proud of their uniqueness while honoring other individual's differences. SLPS is dedicated to integrating ABAR education at all levels of the school community.

Background

Anti-bias, antiracist (ABAR) education supports all children's full development in our multiracial, multilingual, multicultural world and gives them the tools to stand up to prejudice, stereotyping, bias, and eventually to institutional 'isms'.

-Excerpt from [Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves](#), Louise Derman-Sparks & Julie Olsen Edwards (2010).

St. Louis Public Schools has been at the center of the struggle regarding race in St. Louis for over 150 years. Our system was created for the purpose of educating white children whose parents had the means to make sure they were able to receive a quality education. With the Civil War being fought and the Constitution reflecting changes to the servitude and rights of Black Americans, the school system was forced to change as well, but not without a fight. During Reconstruction, St. Louis Public Schools worked against the integration of

schools as a part of a civil rights act being debated in the US Congress. Instead, a separate system of schools for African-Americans were established. Among them, Sumner High School, the oldest high school for Black students west of the Mississippi River.

Towards the end of the 19th Century, Plessy v. Ferguson (1896) codified the practice of “separate but equal” with respect to the public accommodations of services. As we know, the separation was encouraged, but not the equality. This was common practice for St. Louis Public Schools for the next 58 years, until the Brown v. Board of Education decision in 1954. With the City of St. Louis’ population approaching 900,000 people, making St. Louis one of the top 10 cities in the United states for population, the Brown decision forced schools to open to integration. As schools in historically white neighborhoods integrated, the population of the city shifted. Families moved out of the city and established new communities in the suburbs. Between the years of 1950 and 2020, the population of the City of St. Louis declined by over 500,000 residents, due in large part to the disinvestment by the community with respect to integration and education.

In the year 2020, we have come to a further reckoning of our history and past actions with respect to racism in St. Louis Public Schools. Our history is fraught with decisions that have built the school-to-prison pipeline, left some students with skills that are not adequate to successfully navigate life after high school, and left some students scarred with memories of injustices that were not addressed by the schools themselves. We as a school district and as a community must be committed to the work of anti-bias and anti-racist education.

Within the Academics Department of the St. Louis Public Schools, we are aware and acknowledge this history, and we are committed to working against bias and racism for the improvement of our children and community who entrust us.



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ABAR Instructional Resources

Suggested Websites and Resources for Anti-racism in the Classroom

Equal Justice Initiative	The Equal Justice Initiative is committed to ending mass incarceration and excessive punishment in the United States, to challenging racial and economic injustice, and to protecting basic human rights for the most vulnerable people in American society.
Using Photographs to Teach Social Justice	Using Photographs to Teach Social Justice is a series of 12 lessons. Each lesson focuses on a contemporary social justice issue. These lessons are multidisciplinary and geared toward middle- and high-school students.
Even Young Children Notice What's Happening In The World Right Now. Here's What You Can Do To Help Them Understand	This article addresses how to approach children when they have questions regarding protests, police brutality, and other social justice issues they may have seen on TV or around them. Strategies are provided to help with processing emotions and other feelings when they are heightened.
Anti-Racist Resource Guide	This document was created to be used as a resource for anyone looking to broaden their understanding of anti-racism and get involved to combat racism, specifically as it relates to anti-Blackness and police violence. Within this guide, please find a variety of resources to explore practical ways to understand, explain, and solve seemingly intractable problems of racial inequity, white supremacy, police violence, and injustice.
Talking To Children After Racial Incidents	Howard Stevenson, a clinical psychologist at Penn GSE, studies racial literacy and racial trauma. He works with educators and families to help them understand the emotions that racial incidents can bring about, and how to reduce their negative effects on health and well-being.
Center for Racial Justice in Education	This document was compiled by the Center for Racial Justice in Education. It is not meant to be exhaustive, and it will be continually updated as we are made aware of more resources.
Facing History and Ourselves Teaching Idea	This Teaching Idea is a guide for teachers to begin conversations with their students about George Floyd's death and the events that surround it. Such conversations are always difficult for teachers to facilitate, and distance learning presents added challenges to teaching sensitive material. Despite these challenges, it's critical to

	make space for students to process the difficult and deeply painful events.
Why Teaching Black Lives Matter Matters (Teaching Tolerance)	All educators have the civic responsibility to learn and teach the basic history and tenets of this movement for racial justice.
Teaching in Solidarity (Teaching Tolerance)	The presents the guiding principles behind the Black Lives Matter at School / Week of Action. It can be an important frame through which to reimagine more liberal educational spaces for Black children.
Teaching Tolerance	From film kits and lesson plans to the building blocks of a customized Learning Plan—texts, student tasks, and teaching strategies—our resources will help you bring relevance, rigor and social/emotional learning into your classroom—all for FREE.
PBS Learning Media Resources: Race, Racism, Protests...	This is not an exhaustive list of resources. These educational materials are to be used in conjunction with other resources, conversations, and instruction to provide the most complete context for students. These resources are appropriate for middle and high school students, unless otherwise noted. As with all educational materials, please preview these resources prior to utilizing with students to check for appropriateness.
Teaching For Black Lives (Resources)	<i>For some of the materials, you'll need to be a member of the Zinn Education Project. It's free and easy to sign up! Most of the articles in the book include lots of other resources that are listed at the end of the articles. For more resources, check the lists at the end of each article in the book.</i>

Anti-Bias/Anti-Racism (ABAR) Defined

A holistic approach to unmasking and dismantling inequalities and injustice present in society at large.

Curriculum

Instructional Planning

▶ Instructional planning is a process of the teacher using appropriate curricula, instructional strategies, resources and data during the planning process to address the diverse needs of students. St. Louis Public Schools has developed a dynamic way to challenge our education professionals to consider ABAR in lesson planning by requiring them to consider and add **Cultural Context Differentiation** to their lesson plans. Cultural Context Differentiation is lesson differentiation based on students individual needs and learning styles. The teacher should consider and honor the unique cultural differences of EVERY student when selecting content, process, products, the learning environment, the use of ongoing assessment and flexible grouping in an effort to establish a safe and supportive learning environment for ALL.

▶ 4 key elements of Cultural Context Differentiaion

- ▶ Activate Students Prior Knowledge - Encourage students to draw on their prior knowledge in order to contribute to group discussions, which provides an anchor to learning.
- ▶ Make Learning Contextual - Make lessons more contextual and relevant to students and their communities. Solicit student input and encourage students to leverage their cultural capital.
- ▶ Consider Classroom Setup & Groupings - Books, posters and other classroom content should be diverse. Groups should be diverse and ever changing as well.
- ▶ Build Relationships - Build relationships with their students to ensure they feel respected, valued, and seen for who they are.

Cultural Context

Differentiation is lesson differentiation based on students individual needs and learning styles. The teacher should consider and honor the unique cultural differences of EVERY student when selecting content, process, products, the learning environment, the use of ongoing assessment and flexible grouping in an effort to establish a safe and supportive learning environment for ALL.

African American Studies Update

The team, led by Elizabeth Herbert (Gateway STEM) and Joseph Smith (Carnahan) has accomplished an incredible amount of work in their PD cohort this year. The revision of the course is inclusive of literature and informational texts across all timelines of African-American history and the diaspora. The course is organized around the themes of Kwanzaa as opposed to a chronological organization. This will allow students to experience a spectrum of texts across timeliness within each unit, seeing how the themes are woven together across time. The team has signed on to finish the work during the 2020-2021 school year.

Attached below is a copy of the draft Scope & Sequence. Please be mindful that this work is still in progress and this is not a complete document.

Course overview statement (DRAFT):

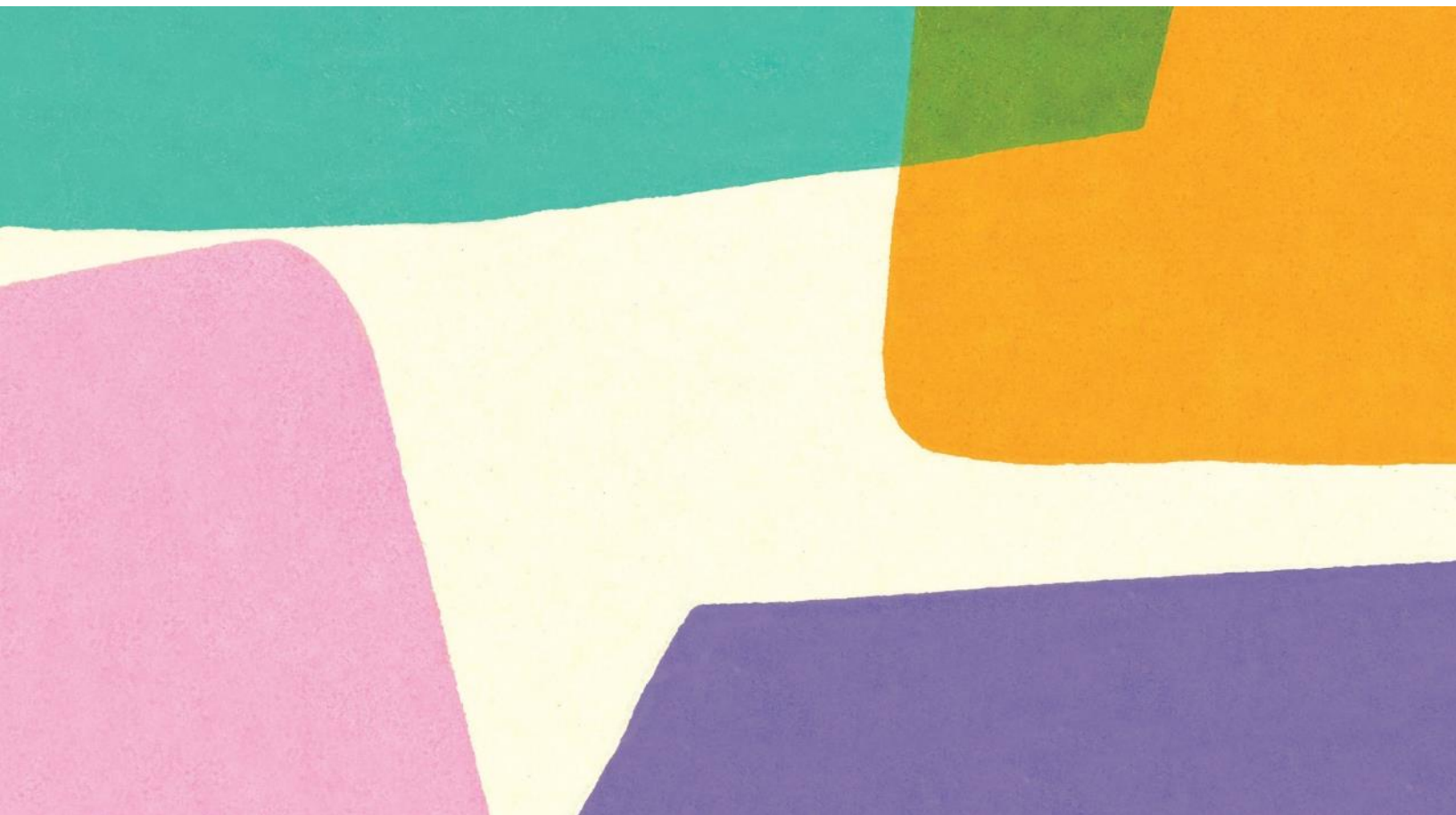
The SLPS African American Studies course will affirm students' self-identity, equip them with critical literacy skills, and empower them to make changes in their community. The course will promote reading, writing, speaking, and listening as a means of developing student cultural identity. Students will analyze culturally relevant texts and artifacts and pursue cultural knowledge outside the classroom, which will lead to greater self-awareness and self-love. This course will explore African American culture, movements, and the literary works that informed these movements. Emphasis will be placed on African cultural elements that influence African American culture.

[African American Studies Scope and Sequence](#)

The revision of the course is inclusive of literature and informational texts across all timelines of African-American history and the diaspora...

Social Studies Updates

- ▶ Resources have been incorporated into the curriculum documents which have been curated by teachers and organizations rooted in. (Stanford History Educators Group, Teaching Tolerance, and Gilder-Lehrman among others.)
- ▶ Primary sources and the analysis of those sources is at the core of classroom work.
- ▶ Ongoing professional development with a focus on inclusivity of minority voices in history has happened since 2016. Professors from St. Louis University and University of Michigan have presented PD to social studies teachers to assist them in making their classes more inclusive.
- ▶ Teachers have participated in PD outside of SLPS to improve their skills of being ABAR. Several teachers have attended the Teaching Black History Conference at the University of Missouri-Columbia over the last two years and have shared those resources with their colleagues.
- ▶ Dr. Glenn Barnes, K-12 Social Studies Curriculum Specialist has provided resources from the National Council for Social Studies to teachers to implement ABAR practices over the last four years.
- ▶ As a part of the social studies budget, resources have been provided to classrooms to bring diverse voices and different perspectives to students. Classroom libraries have been supplemented with graphic novels like *March* (written by Congressman John Lewis) and books authored by Henry Louis Gates.



Professional Development

ABAR requires continued growth and professional development for our teachers. To support the selection of ABAR professional development experiences, we have identified two areas of need in the development of teacher capacity as they relate to ABAR in accordance with the St. Louis Public Schools Performance Based Teacher Evaluation (PBTE). The table below identifies the PD type, PBTE link and sample objectives.

PBTE Links for ABAR PD Selection		
PD Type	PBTE Link	Sample Objectives
Responsive Teaching Strategies	PBTE #2: Knowledge of Student’s characteristics, skills and knowledge Standard 1: Planning and Preparation Criterion 1B: Demonstrating Knowledge of Students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify student’s social/cultural differences, linguistic needs, skill-level, and knowledge base to plan and execute classroom instruction. Apply responsive teaching strategies Create a response learning environment for ALL students.
Teacher/Student Relationships & Responsive Behavior Management	PBTE #18: Response to Student Misbehavior, under Standard 2: Classroom Environment and Criterion 2D: Managing Student Behavior.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a fair and consistent classroom discipline plan aligned with school and district policy. Increase positive reinforcement in their classrooms by 85%

ABAR Book Study

Beginning in September of 2020, The Academic Office will host ABAR book studies for teachers and other stakeholders in an effort to promote conversations that will lead to the application of new ideas in classrooms and the improvement of existing skills.

- ▶ As we enter this new school year, we must remain cognizant of the impact of the events that occur in our society and culture have on our students and community. The senseless killing of George Floyd and so many others under similar circumstances

have caused school districts to take pause and look internally at how their practices contribute the systemic racism in the community. This year, SLPS would like to encourage teachers and staff members to participate in a book study and look at ways we can apply ABAR to our approach to teaching and the work we engage in with our colleagues and community partners.

- ▶ Participation is voluntary. Answering the survey indicates your acceptance to participate in the book study.
- ▶ Please take a minute to complete the [ABAR Book Study Survey](#) and rank which book you would like to focus the study on. We will meet virtually on the second Monday of the month at 4pm starting in September.


Summer Reading Lists

Summer is an important time for students to keep reading and improve their language skills. SLPS has curated a diverse list of text for our elementary and secondary students to enjoy over the summer months. We were mindful to include a diverse author representation and texts that communicated empowerment to the reader. Each grade level features choices that reflect the culturally diverse lives and experiences of students in SLPS.

- ▶ Please access the Summer Reading list [HERE](#).

Next Steps...

- ▶ The St. Louis Public Schools District is committed to the equitable support of its students. By equitable we mean ensuring that all students have access to educational rigor, resources and supports that are designed to maximize the student's academic success and social/emotional well-being in the context of their race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, age, and other protected group status in a manner calibrated to eradicate opportunity gaps caused by historic, systemic and current forms of discrimination and marginalization. (Equity statement developed by the SLPS Equity Team during the 2020-2021 school year.)
- ▶ **Dr. Kacy Seals-Shahid, Principal at Central Visual and Performing Arts High School and the newly appointed SLPS Equity Ambassador** is committed to carrying out the following next steps using an action research model to identify best practices as we move forward in our ABAR efforts.
 - ▶ Equity teams consisting of students (Equity Leaders) and staff (Equity Coaches)
 - ▶ Identify key equity indicators e.g. schools and district panorama survey data, grade distribution, special education placement and other demographic factors
 - ▶ Professional Development- all school leaders, teachers and staff will be trained as equity designers and build the capacity to redesign and address oppressive policies
 - ▶ Equity Instructional Learning Walks formerly FILW (Focused Instructional Learning Walks), Empathy Interviews, Student Advocacy and Affinity Groups (student voice)
 - ▶ Review best practices around Anti-Bias/Anti-Racism practices and procedures
 - ▶ Collaborate and propose a SLPS Equity Policy



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