Welcoming and Affirming Communities Unit Prep Day

Background

The Welcoming and Affirming Communities Units were created from the following understandings:

- The need to address the current context of: reentry into the school setting after COVID 19, Shelter-in-Place, and Distance Learning, and related trauma for our communities and to support teachers to continue to centralize the needs of English Learners.

- The importance of creating strong relationships, first and foremost, with students and their families and attending to them throughout the year to create an affirming, safe, and caring learning community, clearly indicated by all research during this time.

- The themes that are embedded in these units, around identity, diversity, respect, inclusion, equity, and anti-bias should be threaded through the remaining content of the year, and this may involve modifying units, reflecting on them to make sure they include diverse perspectives representative of our schools and communities.

- **Because of the topic and nature of some of the strategies, it is critical to look at the materials ahead of time to develop understanding of the content.** That background knowledge will inform how you want to connect with students around the content and even what you may implement in your classroom. (You are free to modify the materials for your context, students, and community needs.)

Recommended Readings for Teacher Background

- We highly recommend that you read the articles in **Recommended Background Readings** before exploring the units. There are also links to resources within the Strategy Planning Resources for additional information regarding the topics.

- Summary documents in the Toolkit on Socio-emotional Learning and Family Engagement

Unit Review

- There is alignment across the units. Some strategies use the same materials with suggested implementation to be developmentally appropriate. The content across the grades includes similar themes. **TK-6 Unit Alignment**
- Read the **1. Start Here Letter**
- Strategies that are the same in each unit to support families in having similar conversations throughout the unit with children in all grades:
    - Beginning of Unit Family letter

        - Home School Connection #1
        - Dialogic Read Aloud
        - Identity Activities
        - Unit Resource Library

    - We have provided a Thematic Planner and Pacing Guide with links for each unit. Start the review of the unit with these two documents.
    - Strategies have been designed with a Planning Resource Guide but can be adapted for your needs and purposes.
    - In addition, we are recommending that, as a school site, you conduct Family Empathy interviews, to understand the needs of the families in your community.

Teaching Materials to be Created

- We are giving you a lot of the content but there will be some prep that needs to be done:

    - DRA read aloud
    - Narrative Input
    - Draw and Labels
    - Read alouds and other literature embedded in strategies
    - Chants

- We encourage you to divide up prepping the strategies for delivery to the degree possible.

- Units also incorporate the use of some materials that need to be **printed.** We have advised your administrators of this.