

## March 16th Virtual Q&A Follow-up - Part 2 of 2

Thanks again to all of our community members who attended the March 16th virtual Q&A on the topics of Equity & Social-Emotional Learning. ([Slides from Q/A on March 16, 2021](#)) We look forward to continuing the open dialog on these important topics. We are here to listen and foster a greater understanding of our efforts toward equity literacy and the social-emotional well-being of all of our students.

You can find answers to the first round of questions posed before and during the Q&A session [here](#). This article provides additional responses to the questions that came in just before the session started.

### **Is there a specific new equity curriculum embedded in teacher programs or content?**

No. Our equity work is not a new curriculum or packaged program at large or embedded in teacher programs, projects, or content.

Our equity work is an effort to:

- **Observe** our established curriculum, lessons, and procedures for equal representation.
- **Raise awareness** of language, behaviors, and actions that are hidden, nuanced, or subtle that cause harm.
- **Uncover systemic blind spots**, and learn to understand and rectify them.
- **Encourage healthy, respectful dialog** and inquiry between people of different perspectives.

### **Will grading for equity be mandatory?**

As covered in the previous set of [questions published 3/23](#), grading for equity focuses on three pillars: accuracy, bias-resistance, and intrinsic motivation. Grading for equity will be required in the sense that all teachers will be expected to observe their grading procedures for equity as part of nurturing an anti-oppressive environment. Teachers' degree of development in this area will not be treated punitively; rather they will be encouraged and supported in their efforts to root out unfairness.

This will be an iterative process that happens over time. As we learn more and know more, we will advance our skills to ensure equitable grading practices. Potential changes to grading practices may require a re-examination of the learning objectives, but changes will not be made without thoughtful consideration, the involvement of our community where appropriate, and with the students' best interest always at the forefront.

### **Is it necessary to select new literature that includes sexually explicit content?**

Our staff and curriculum committee thoughtfully assess new literature proposals. They consider many facets, including the students' developmental level and age, and what kinds of stories, texts, and novels present the best opportunity to engage and teach our students the skills they will need to be successful in college. Many of the best literature texts, new and old, provide

older learners the opportunity to grapple with the complex and challenging topics of violence, sex, loss, relationships, and life challenges.

**What tools are teachers using to evaluate their practices and curriculum? Are they using Critical Race Theory?**

Teachers are using a variety of resources to evaluate their practices and curriculum, most of which have been identified based on the research done by professional development working groups this year and last year. (E.g. *Grading for Equity* by Joe Feldman.) There is no one tool being used to conduct this work. To limit ourselves to one tool or one resource may perpetuate blindspots. Our focus is on the broader lens of equity literacy and how it can improve our learning environment for all students and staff.

We are not introducing Critical Race Theory (CRT) specifically as a tool to influence our curriculum or programming; however, from the standpoint that CRT seeks to find solutions that lead to greater justice for all, we are working toward the same end in our equity literacy work. To be clear, our focus on building equity literacy in our school is not solely about racial injustice, it's about rooting out injustices of *any* kind (gender, socio/economic, ability, etc.) that hinder a student's ability to thrive in our school environment. Moreover, we know that the ability to consider an idea or viewpoint from multiple, informed perspectives is a skill that our students need to develop as they prepare to enter college and, eventually, the workplace, and to fulfill Peak to Peak's mission to prepare students to "become active and responsible members of an interdependent world."

(If you are unfamiliar, you can find the definition for CRT [here](#).)

**Is this work being done with the assumption that any disparity in measures (whether it be GPA, college acceptance, standardized test scores, attendance, tardiness, late work, disproportionate enrollment in a class, etc.) is attributed to racism, white power, privilege, oppression and/or discrimination?**

No. We have not made assumptions that student performance or behavioral issues are simply or directly tied to racism or any other scourge. There is great complexity in understanding and overcoming barriers to student success. As our school always has, we rely on real data and the life experiences of our students, families, and staff to drive change. Based on that, we know that we must remove bias from our systems to foster an optimal learning and working environment. Our efforts on this front are in keeping with our core responsibility to the mission of our school. It is a top priority in our strategic plan to create a responsive school culture where all students have a clear sense of belonging and feel safe.

**In the [Piqued magazine](#), it states that P2P "must strive to be an anti-oppressive school where all students learn to see, respond to and redress inequity." How exactly is this being taught to our students?**

There is no set equity curriculum, content, or sequence of materials being presented to students as subject matter. Instead, we are striving to provide an example to students through our

behavior, language, interactions, processes, and procedures. We are demonstrating through our actions and systems that we are taking steps toward being an anti-oppressive school.

In addition to increasing our staff's level of understanding and empathy for the impact of oppressive practices or behavior, this requires action. Similar to anti-bullying training that makes clear the role of the bystander in perpetuating bully behavior by allowing it to go unchallenged, we hope to build our community's equity literacy moving forward so that collectively we can see injustice when it exists, respond to it and redress it within our school. For now, there is no standalone anti-oppression training for students. We are focusing on developing our staff's equity literacy first as a foundation for the future.

**Is there an “equal representation of materials” based on the percent of Peak to Peak students in each subgroup? How is equal representation of materials assessed/determined, implemented, and tracked?**

We are not attempting to hit specific percentages of representation of materials/literature/texts for any subgroup within our school, whether by race, gender, or any other delineation; however, we *are* striving to ensure greater representation overall than we have accomplished in the past. Diversifying the representation of voices in the classroom provides more of our students the formative opportunity of seeing themselves or their life experiences represented in course content while giving *every* student the rich educational benefit of exposure to diverse voices.

**Peak to Peak equity article repository:**

[“Piqued” alumni magazine](#)

[P2P Equity Article #1](#)

[P2P Equity Article #2](#)

[P2P Equity Article #3](#)

[Slides from Q/A on March 16, 2021](#)

[March 16th Virtual Q&A Follow-up Part 1](#)