

### **Karen Engels Wins Capron Award**



*Engels with Graham and Parks Principal Tony Byers.*

Congratulations to **Graham and Parks** teacher **Karen Engels** on receiving the **Barbara Capron Award for Excellence in Teaching Elementary Social Studies**.

Karen was recognized for “incorporating innovative and effective instructional strategies and techniques, and fostering a spirit of inquiry and a spirit of democratic beliefs and values.” The award was presented by the **Massachusetts Council for the Social Studies** on Wednesday, May 9th at the Four Points Sheraton Hotel in Norwood, MA.

In her acceptance speech, Karen described the critical work of elementary teachers: *“As social studies teachers, we have an awesome responsibility. Because the way we teach children about our shared history will determine if they view the world as it is with resignation, or whether they see themselves with*

*agency to make our society better. It's our responsibility to help children understand the complex, messy and painful truths of this history. They are capable of more sophisticated understanding than we often give them credit for. But, it is equally incumbent on us to endow children with hope. To do this, we need to provide each and every child with ample mirrors of strength, courage, and triumph against adversity. They need to read Frederick Douglass' Fourth of July Speech. They need to visit the Lowell Mills where young women organized the first campaign for a 10-hour day. They need to meet local indigenous activists like Wampemequin Wampatuck. They need to sing the words of Woody Guthrie. They need to feel that change is possible. And this is what we do every day! And it's incredibly joyful.”*

### **CRLS History Teachers in the Media**

Last summer, **Marlin Kann** was awarded \$3,000 to conduct research at Harvard's **Schlesinger Library**. The library profiled his work creating a digital archive for student use a recent issue of their [newsletter](#).

**Kevin Dua** and **Rachel Otty** were recipients of this year's Faculty Distinction Award at CRLS.

- **Otty's** work on teaching religious literacy and Islam has been published by PBS and Education Week. She was recently interviewed for Primary Source's “What Teachers Need to Know: The Middle East,” [podcast on Islam](#).
- **Dua**, who joined the department this year and is CRLS's Black Student Union advisor, appeared in an episode of public television's [Basic Black](#) this spring. He was also profiled in a [WBUR Edify segment](#), “Teaching Force In Mass. Public Schools Still Overwhelmingly White.”

## Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT)

This year, the History Department continued to provide professional development in culturally responsive teaching. This work is connected to three important district initiatives:

- 1.2: Provide all CPS educators with cultural proficiency training and implement ongoing cultural proficiency professional learning in all schools.
- 1.5: Provide all students with access to challenging curriculum and technology, such as the Grade 9 Level Up and CRLS 1:1 programs.
- 2.2: Expand rigorous, joyful, culturally responsive learning experiences across the district.

### Elementary School

For the second year, **Estefania Rodriguez** taught a choice course, “Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy in the Elementary Classroom.” The focus of this course is to develop a critical lens - and not a checklist - for social justice and anti-racist teaching. This lens supports teachers in determining how best to adapt their content and instructional practices to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Understanding that diversity consists of several layers, both visible and invisible, allows students to bring their authentic selves to our classrooms.

### Upper Schools

All upper school history teachers participated in an intensive course on culturally sustaining instruction, facilitated by **Rodriguez** and **Adrienne Stang**. Teachers explored racial-identity development, the power of “teacher talk,” developing inclusive curriculum and pedagogical practices, and ways to leverage radical hope. Resources included Chris Emdin’s *For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood and the Rest of Ya’ll Too!* and short pieces by other educators, including Beverly Daniel Tatum, Mica Pollack and Derald Wing Sue. Teachers wrote powerful reflections about identity and presented strategies for creating culturally sustaining classrooms based on Emdin’s work.

## CRLS ~ Level Up

Ninth grade history teachers at Cambridge Rindge and Latin continued planning for the launch of Level Up Honors World History II this September. In collaboration with their colleagues in the English and Special Education Departments, they engaged in equity-focused professional development with **Dr. Darnisa Amante** of the **Disruptive Equity Education Project** (DEEP).

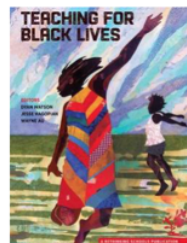
### ~ Resources to further your CRT learning ~

#### Podcasts

- [Teaching While White](#)
- [Colorblind](#): Race Across Generations
- PRI’s [Otherhood](#)
- [Zaretta Hammond’s](#) work on CRT & the brain

#### Books

- Chandler and Hawley, eds. *Race Lessons: Using Inquiry to Teach About Race in Social Studies* (2017)
- Watson, et. al. *Teaching for Black Lives* ([Rethinking Schools](#), 2018)



- Pohlen, *Gay and Lesbian History for Kids: The Century-Long Struggle for LGBT Rights* (2016)



#### Shorter Reads

- Johnson’s [Sparkling Engagement with Hip-Hop](#)
- [Culturally Responsive Instruction](#) (ASCD)
- [Culturally Responsive Teaching Matters](#) (Equity Alliance)

## Summer Professional Development

This summer, CPS teachers will engage in a range of professional development programs in history and social studies.

**Chris Montero** (CRLS) was awarded a **Carolyn A. Lynch Teacher Fellowship** at the **Leventhal Map Center**. This summer, Chris will collaborate with another fellow to develop curricula using maps and documents from the digitized collections of the Leventhal Map Center and the Boston Public Library. He will focus on 19th century westward expansion in the United States.

**Dionne Campbell** (CRLS) was accepted into a **Gilder Lehrman** summer seminar on the Civil Rights Movement at Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee.

Ten CPS Educators will be participating in courses facilitated by [Primary Source](#):

- Art & Inquiry for Global Learning at the Musuem of Fine Arts, Boston ~ **Therese Bellino** and **Michelle Connolly**
- Engaging Diverse Students and Families ~ **Karen Engels, Kristin Neirich & Lucy Alekseyev**
- Africans in the Age of Atlantic Slavery ~ **Sarah Bastzo & Beatriz Motto**
- Thinking Like An Historian ~ **Liz Hill & Jenny Chung**

Nineteen CPS educators will participate in a **K-12 Working Group** to explore the new [HSS Framework](#), while engaging in CPS's mission to use culturally responsive, multicultural curriculum. This committee will take a broad view of the framework and will focus on establishing priority standards and essential questions for grade levels.

K-5 Teachers: The CPS social studies curriculum can be found [here](#).

## Elementary Students Engage in Civic Learning

As part of the district's partnership with [Children Discovering Justice](#), elementary students from five CPS schools participated in mock trials at the **Moakley Courthouse** this year.



*4<sup>th</sup> Grade students from **Fletcher Maynard** participate in a mock hearing about immigration.*

Students from the **King Open** (below with **Mayor Marc McGovern**) participated in a public comment session on parks and playgrounds. They discussed the park planning process and spoke with representatives from the Department of Public Works.



*Photos courtesy of Elizabeth Less, Mayor's office.*

## K-8 Coach Transition

A warm thank you to our outgoing K-8 District Instructional Coach, **Estefania Rodriguez** (left), who is moving to Oakland, California. While Estefania worked for the Cambridge Public Schools for only two years, she made invaluable contributions to the district and the department, especially in the area culturally sustaining pedagogy. A participant in her choice course captures her work beautifully: "Thank you Estefania, for providing the space, the facilitation, the tools and the resources to help us further our journey...to create more culturally sustaining spaces for our students. YOU are a force multiplier of this mission..."

Please welcome **Jenny Chung** (right) who will be the department's new coach beginning in August. Jenny is currently teaching 8th grade social studies at the Putnam Avenue Upper School and is one of the district's two Research for Better Teaching in-district trainers. She has taught in the Cambridge Public Schools since 2006 and was awarded the William Spratt Award for Excellence in Teaching Middle School Social Studies by the Massachusetts Council for the Social Studies in 2016.



## In Memory of Sam Bixler

*May 16, 1988 - February 14, 2018*



Sam Bixler joined the CRLS history department this fall. He immediately built positive relationships with his students and was known for his compassion, kindness and curiosity. He taught Advanced Placement Comparative Government and was a member of the Level Up Team, which focused on developing Honors World History for all students. He was thoughtful, energetic, and easily connected with both students and staff.

Prior to coming to the Cambridge Schools, Sam taught in the Lawrence Public Schools. He grew up in Denver and graduated from Ohio Wesleyan University, where majored in history and education and played football. At the time of his death, he was working on his master's degree in education policy and leadership studies at Boston University.

The department extends condolences to Sam's father Matt Bixler, sister Meredith Bixler, step mother M'Lou Bahlinger, and Sam's girlfriend, Andrea Cioffi.

