

TO: KITTERY COMMUNITY  
FROM: ERIC WADDELL, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS  
DATE: OCTOBER 10, 2017  
RE: MOVING FORWARD WITH A COMMITMENT

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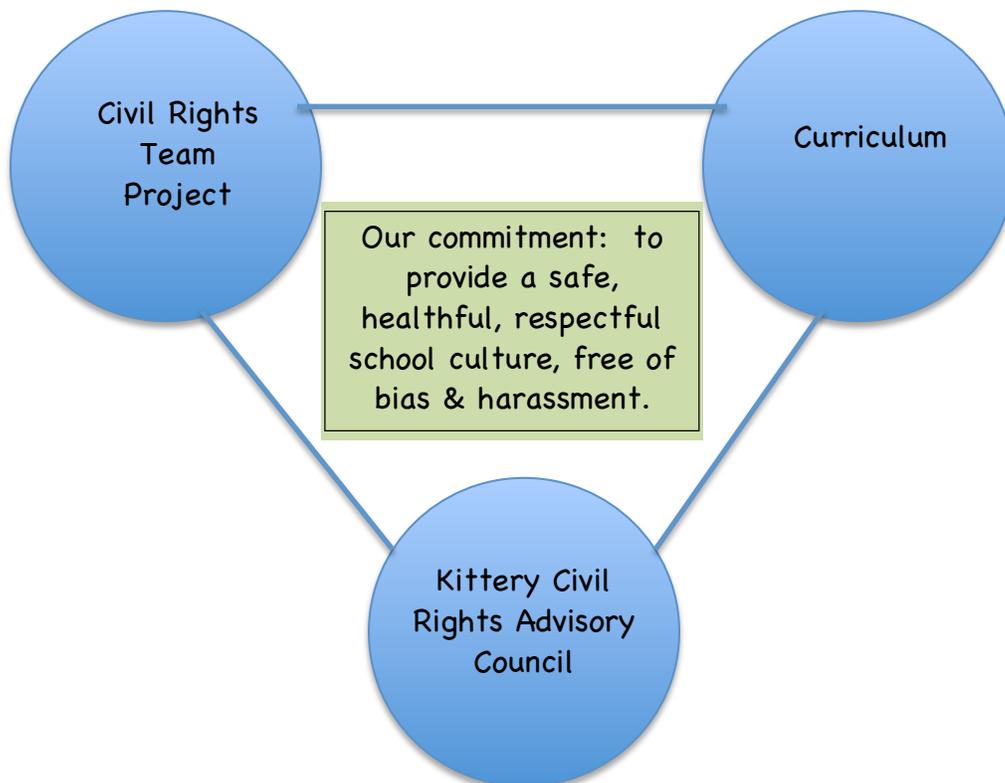
As you may know, the Kittery School District has made a commitment for the 2017-18 school year to provide a safe, healthful, and respectful school culture, free of bias and harassment. What will we do to work toward that commitment? We will:

- *Provide ongoing professional development for our staff.*
- *Create learning opportunities for our students.*
- *Offer education for parents and the community.*

On August 30<sup>th</sup>, we experienced a highly engaging half-day workshop for our entire staff to help them identify and then challenge bias and harassment in our classrooms. The training was provided by the Maine Office of Civil Rights, Attorney General's Office. It was a successful start. We have also experienced painful examples of racism in our schools and on various social media platforms where students today spend so much of their time. Nationwide protests that have garnered a lot of media attention have complicated this already complex issue with feelings about what it means to be a patriot, what it means to be an American, and what it means to uphold the Constitution.

As we move forward, the ***Kittery Civil Rights Initiative*** will be our approach to joining this national discussion about race, multiculturalism, civility, and acceptance of all groups at a time when many are feeling marginalized. The three-domain approach is illustrated here:

### ***Kittery Civil Rights Initiative***



Each of the three domains of the Kittery Civil Rights Initiative will play an important role. In the Kittery School District, the **Civil Rights Team Project (CRTP)** will consist of three Civil Rights Teams (grades 5/6, 7/8, & 9-12). The students who participate in this co-curricular opportunity will work with trained advisors and will follow the Civil Rights Team Project framework, a resource from the Maine Attorney General's Office. These are student-led organizations whose focus is to engage the school community in thinking, talking, and acting on issues of bias (especially bias based on race, color, national origin and ancestry, religion, physical and mental disabilities, gender, and sexual orientation) in an age-appropriate manner through education and awareness efforts.

The **Curriculum** domain of the *Kittery Civil Rights Initiative* will be driven by the District's team of school counselors. Although delivery and reinforcement of the civil rights curriculum is the responsibility of all faculty and staff, the school counselors will work hard to catalog the components of the K-12 curriculum to ensure that there are no gaps or unnecessary overlaps in the Social/Emotional vein of their work where a lot of bias-related learning begins. The K-4 grade span leans heavily on *Responsive Classroom* and *Second Step*, and that will be captured as well. During the middle and high school years, themes of civil rights, immigration, and multiculturalism help to put into context what students have learned. A robust Advisory program also provides a solid vehicle to address issues of bias in school, in the community, and in social media.

The third domain will move beyond the walls of the school into the community. The **Kittery Civil Rights Advisory Council** will provide a community perspective and raise awareness of issues related to multiculturalism. The KCRAC will also help to execute the important actionable item connected to this critical 2017-18 commitment by helping to plan, develop, and execute effective educational programs for families and the community. In fact, the first such event is already in the works, even before the launch of KCRAC—a community discussion facilitated by experienced and talented organizations to look at race and what we can all do to improve the climate in school and in the community.

Very soon, Mathew Kiernan, Director of School Counseling for the Kittery School District, will invite interested community members (students, parents, civic leaders, community members) to indicate their interest in being part of the **Kittery Civil Rights Advisory Council**. Please watch for it! In the meantime, I appreciate your continued support of our excellent schools and reiterate our purpose: to create a supportive and healthy learning environment free of bias and harassment while fostering a sense of belonging for each and every student in the Kittery School District. We are steadfast in our commitment to our students, their families, and the entire community.