



The mission of Communities In Schools is to surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life.

Whatcom-Skagit

BUILDING A COMMUNITY DIALOGUE AGAINST RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION

Children and youth deserve a caring community that empowers them to achieve their goals in the classroom and beyond. In order to do so, racism and other inequalities in our educational system and society must be acknowledged and addressed. Communities In Schools of Whatcom-Skagit exists to build on student strengths and overcome systemic barriers through advocacy, partnerships and individualized socio-emotional supports.

Racism is a negative factor affecting the social determinants of health and of future economic stability among minorities. The tragic impact and the injustice of racism on children is all around us when we consider that Black children suffer deep emotional trauma when their parents are taken away by police violence and incarceration; when we witness, year after year, that English Language Learners graduate high school at significantly much lower rates than any of their peers; when we don't dismantle barriers that criminalize Latino and Native American children whose communities are being more disproportionately affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, or when we see that the national discourse falsely blames Asian American children (and their parents) for this pandemic, instead of addressing existing inequalities in healthcare access. Mountains of data highlight unacceptable disparities in health, education, and other key outcomes for children and youth of color. Research attests to the lasting physical, mental, and economic toll that racism takes on children as they advance through their educational journey into adulthood.

The tenets and principles of representative democracy hold that individual wellbeing, happiness, and the opportunity to explore one's full potential is not the exclusive privilege of a few. In fact, the tenets of representative democracy hold that the collective progress that is to be enjoyed by **everyone** is achieved only through a critical debate and dialogue about the prevalent systemic biases that cause disparities. Contrived or stalling systemic monologues are the typical norm in anti-democratic systems. That is why we stand with nonviolent advocates and protesters determined to kindle a peaceful community conversation that aims to build a just, inclusive and equitable future in which all children grow up free from the catastrophic effects of racism and discrimination.

Heeding to the call for action and personal responsibility to ["be an ally... in the spaces where we are empowered"](#) issued by Superintendent Chris Reykdal, we hope that during Academic Year 2020-2021 you will join us in building strong community assets and alliances to address this critical topic. We hope that as a community we hold a candle in our hearts to reflect on and honor the legacy of all past and recent victims of racism.

Our hope at CIS of Whatcom-Skagit is that as a community we undeniably affirm that the legitimate issues of racism and police brutality, addressed by Black Lives Matter and other anti-racist/anti-discriminatory initiatives in our region, are [Human Rights](#) issues that require a democratic and compassionate community response, a courageous commitment to step out of ourselves to empathize with the suffering of others, and the resolve to lift everyone up by working towards ending racism and discrimination everywhere in the U.S.