

Building Inclusive Curriculum: Uplifting Black and Muslim Identity, History and Joy.

February 19, 2026

The FAIR Act

Fair

Accurate

Inclusive

Respectful

The FAIR Education Act requires schools to include factual lessons about social movements, current events and history of **people of color, people with disabilities and LGBT people** into existing social studies coursework.

SB 48:
signed into
law by
California
Governor
Jerry
Brown, July
14, 2011

A message from Clinton MS Students

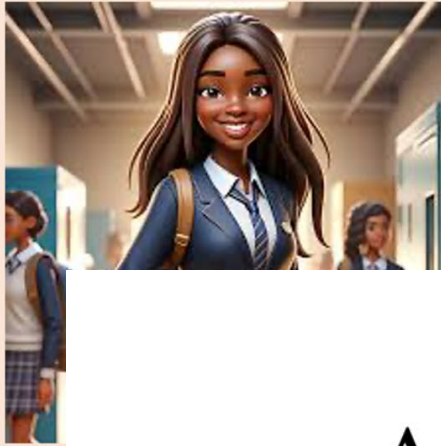
February 19, 2026

Reflections from Clinton Middle School BSU

Building a meaningful school culture which aims to support Black students is all our business:

Relationship is the catalyst!

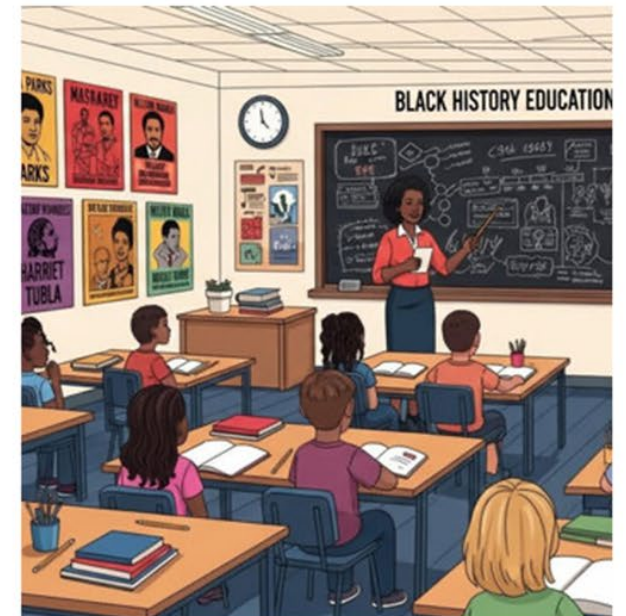
Michael Watts LCSW, PPSC
Psychiatric Social Worker (BSAP)
Fremont High School



A whole school approach starts with adults

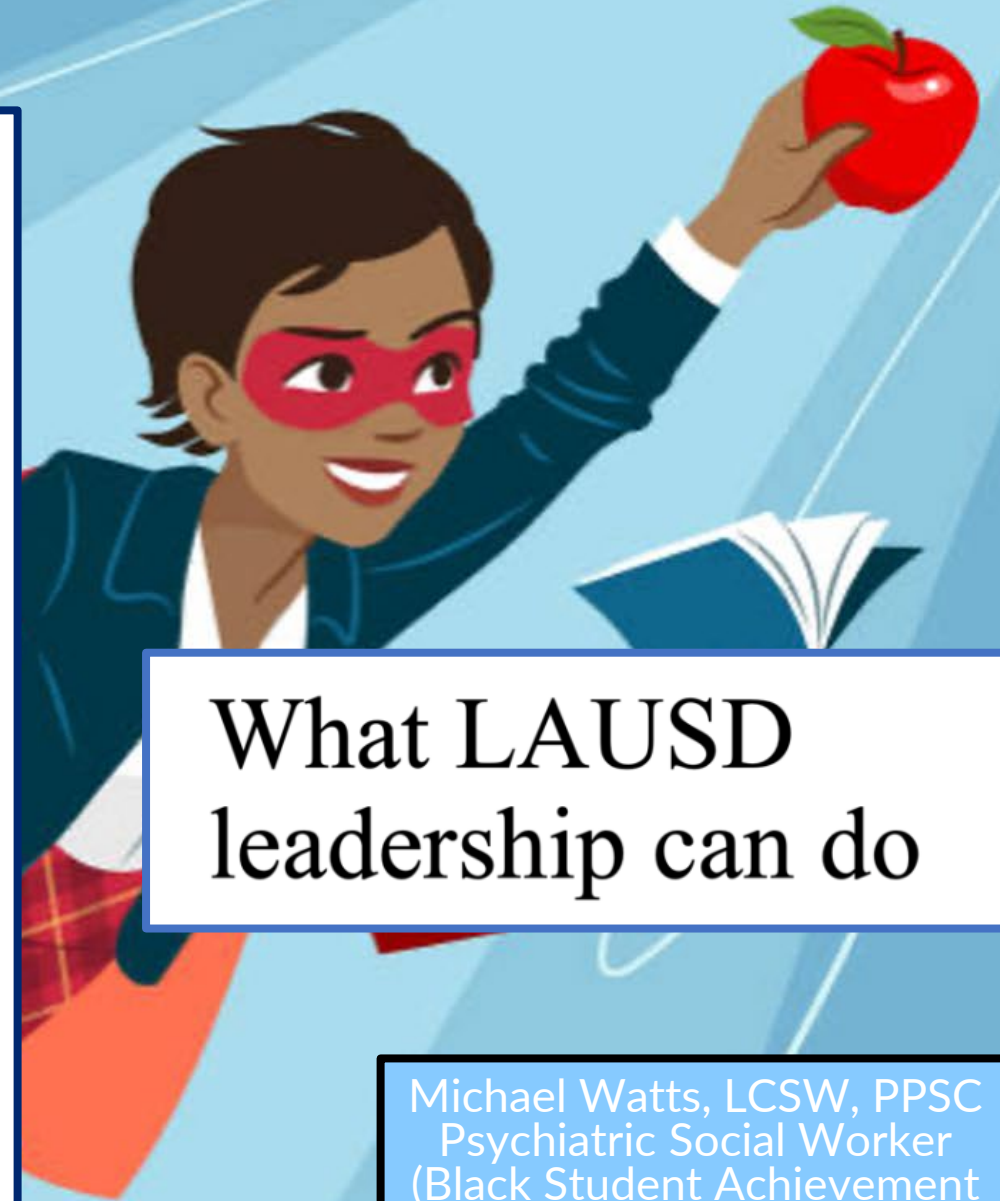
Adult self-awareness in schools

- Be perpetually mindful of unhealthy implicit bias', generalizations, and stereotypes when thinking of our Black students.
- Display genuineness and attentiveness while listening to understand the thoughts, ideas, perceptions and beliefs of our Black students.
- Be patient, polite and present while engaged with our Black students.
- Understand that our Black students are gifted, talented and purposeful.
- Consider flexibility with pedagogical approach, namely while synthesizing African-American cultural context into existing course content.



Michael Watts, LCSW, PPSC
Psychiatric Social Worker
(Black Student Achievement
Plan)
John C. Fremont High School

- Host expert-led professional development workshops which focus on the topics social and emotional intelligence.
- Have staff take *Implicit-Association* and *Explicit Self-Report* surveys to help create awareness around the dangers associated with implicit bias and stereotypes in the educational system.
- Afford staff regular fireside chats, led by an expert, regarding cultural dynamics related to the African American child and adolescent 's school experience.
- Host expert-led workshops around trauma, grief and loss, and their impact on general adolescent development.



What LAUSD leadership can do

Michael Watts, LCSW, PPSC
Psychiatric Social Worker
(Black Student Achievement
Plan)
John C. Fremont High School

**In this moment of
heightened insecurity and
repression, how do we uplift
Black identity, history and
joy in Schools and
Classrooms?**



Dorsey High School

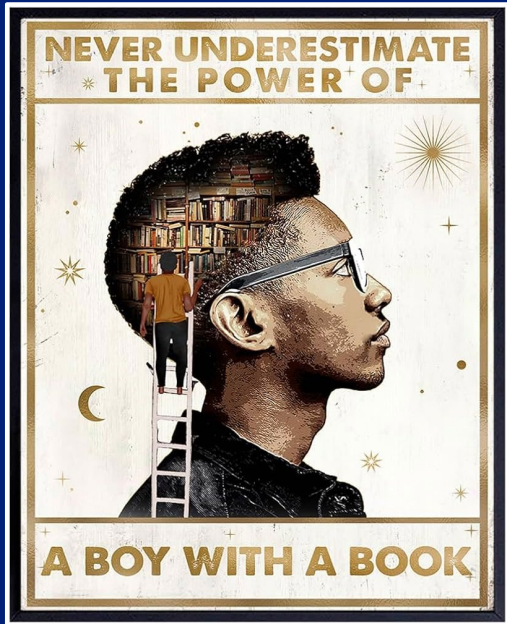
- ★ From South L.A | LAUSD student 3-12 grade
- ★ B.A in English / Minor - Af. Am Studies | UCLA 24'
- ★ First year teacher ; 2nd yr. at Dorsey H.S (student teaching)
- ★ Student Population:
 - Predominantly **Black and/or Latinx/e**
 - Working with 9, 11, 12 grade(s)
 - GATE , 504 / IEP , Newcomer (EL) students



Nyyah Henry (she/they)

ELA Teacher

Dorsey High School

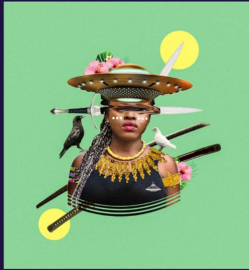


- ★ **Environment:** Affirming spaces, student centered art / decor, classroom playlist(s)
- ★ **Relationships (SEL):** Daily check ins, Community Circles, space for laughter
- ★ **Instruction:** Journals (on joy, memory, family, etc.), Autoethnographies, PBL
- ★ **Curriculum:** *Parable of the Sower* | *The Kite Runner* ; Anchor text(s) by Black authors

Dorsey High School

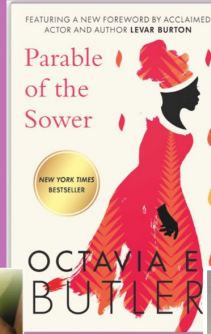
What is Afrofuturism?

- literary genre and cultural movement
- Reimagines the past and present through a Black lens to create more empowering futures for African Americans
- incorporates science fiction, fantasy & horror techniques
- emphasizes challenge, resistance, empowerment
- It imagines the future through stories, art, and music that center on Black people and their experiences.



Parable of the Sower

- Written in 1993; Set in 2024, society has crumbled due to climate change, economic inequality, and violence.
- Lauren Olamina, a 15-year-old girl, is living with her family in a collapsing world.
- novel follows Lauren, a young woman who can feel the pain of others; Several characters from various walks of life join her on her journey north and learn of a religion she has envisioned and titled "Earthseed".



Anticipation Guide - Parable of the Sower (P.O.T.S)

Before we read, let's think about our opinion on some of the big ideas of the novel...

Parable- short story or saying, used to teach a lesson

Sower: someone who plants seeds



— THE INGREDIENTS OF ME —

In our Identity Unit we've been exploring the many parts of who we are—our personal traits, our communities, our cultures—and the ways these identities overlap and shape our lives. We've started with identity wheels, "I Am"/ "I Am From" poems, as well as a number of reflective journals to begin identifying what makes each of us unique.

Task : Now you will bring all of these pieces together in a creative project: a Personal Recipe Book representing your Identity. Just like a recipe combines different ingredients to create a dish, your book will combine stories, reflections, and creative writing to represent the "ingredients" that make you, you.

This project will let you practice narrative writing while celebrating your individuality, your community, and your culture.

Required Content: DUE ON **OCTOBER 9th (Per. 3) / OCTOBER 10th (Per. 2 & 8)**

- Cover Page
- Identity Wheel
- "I Am" Poem or "I Am From" Poem
- Personal Statement
- Community Ingredient
- Cultural Recipe/Story
- Recipe Card for Me
- Final Reflection & Identity Unit Connection

Flavor & culture: by Kai

I am 48 teaspoons of black. My community supports my identity because it shows me and shapes who I am by showing me how strong my community is, and gee-whiz am I glad to be black.



PARABLE OF THE SOWER - ANTICIPATION GUIDE

Statement	Agree	Disagree
People are naturally either good or bad	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A community should always protect its most vulnerable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Humans are naturally selfish and will always ask in their own best interest	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Change is something to fear rather than to embrace	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Religion can provide comfort/structure, but can also be used to control people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
It is impossible to survive without trusting/ working with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Based on the information I gave you related to the novel setting, characters, and theme(s) – what are some conflicts, situations, feelings you predict will arise in the novel?

fighting over limited resources like food, water, safety
 if change to society collapses and rules disappear
 of between helping others vs protecting yourself
 others struggling to trust others while trying to
 survive.

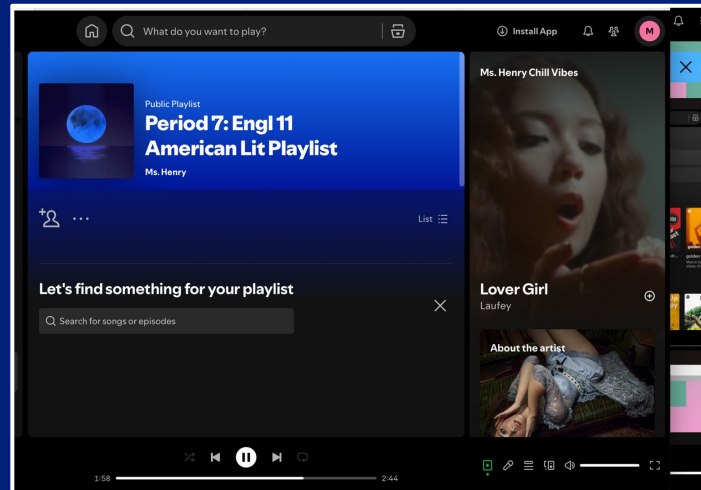
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Based on the information I gave you related to the novel setting, characters, and theme(s) – what are some conflicts, situations, feelings you predict will arise in the novel?

- Some problems I could see arise in this novel is
- corruption, murder, and a whole lot of other felonies
- and crimes.

Dorsey High School



10. FIRE WRITE - UTOPIA: PERFECT WORLD (10/15)

Writing continuously for 10 minutes, answer the following:

Prompt:

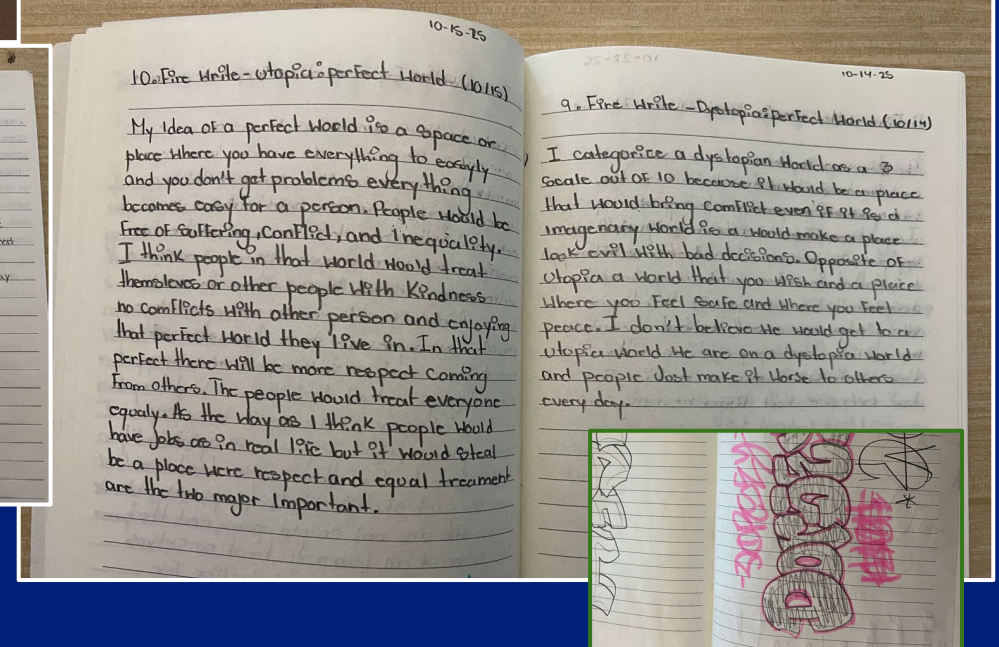
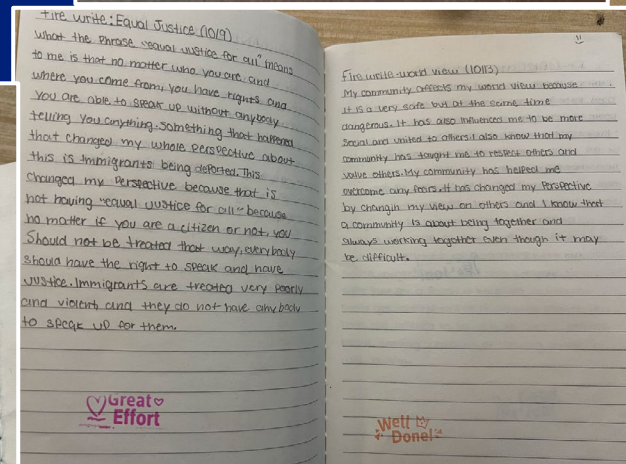
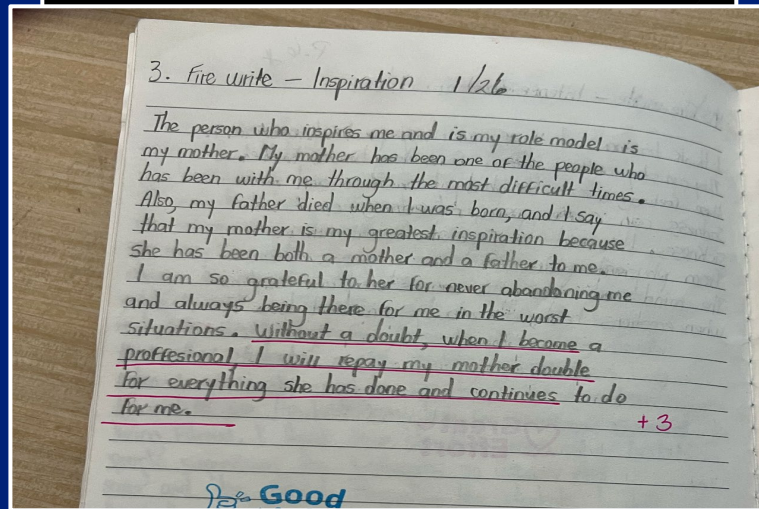
What is your idea of a perfect world?
How would people treat each other?
How would everyone live or survive?

¿Cuál es tu idea de un mundo perfecto?

¿Cómo se tratarían las personas?

¿Cómo vivirían o sobrevivirían todos?

AT LEAST 6 SENTENCES



Challenges

Dorsey High School

- ★ Student Interest (ex. not seeing themselves reflected)
- ★ Passion for the subject; necessity vs. optional inclusion
- ★ The threat of less “Rigor”
- ★ Trauma vs. joy centered curriculum
- ★ **Accessibility**

Challenges

Dorsey High School



★ (Combatting) Anti - Blackness

- Naming the reality ; “microaggressions”
- Separate Ignorance from Responsibility ; Community Agreements
- Teaching shared history ; *Anti - Blackness exists inside different POC communities* | “oppression is not a competition”
- Make the behavior VISIBLE ; activities that prompt *Reflection*

What would it take to scale up how educators and schools uplift Black Identity, History, and Joy

- ★ Access — not just encouragement
 - Classroom sets that include: Black speculative fiction, coming of age stories, poetry, everyday narratives (of love, friendship, etc.)
- ★ Paid PD days:
 - Teaching Black literature across the genres
 - Facilitating identity affirming discussion
 - Trauma informed + joy-centered pedagogy
 - Collaborative planning time: ELA + Ethnic Studies + SS + Arts

Dorsey High School



What would it take to scale up how educators and schools uplift Black Identity, History, and Joy

★ Administrative Protection

- Publically affirming that Black centered curriculum is aligned with standards & district values
- Providing scripted language for family concerns
- **Ensuring observations value:** student voice, cultural relevance, creative assessments

★ HIRE and RETAIN more Black /POC educators

**In this moment of
heightened insecurity and
repression, how do we uplift
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joy in Schools and
Classrooms?**

Discussion



Building Inclusive Curriculum: Uplifting Muslim Identity, History and Joy.

Strengthening Belonging in Our Schools

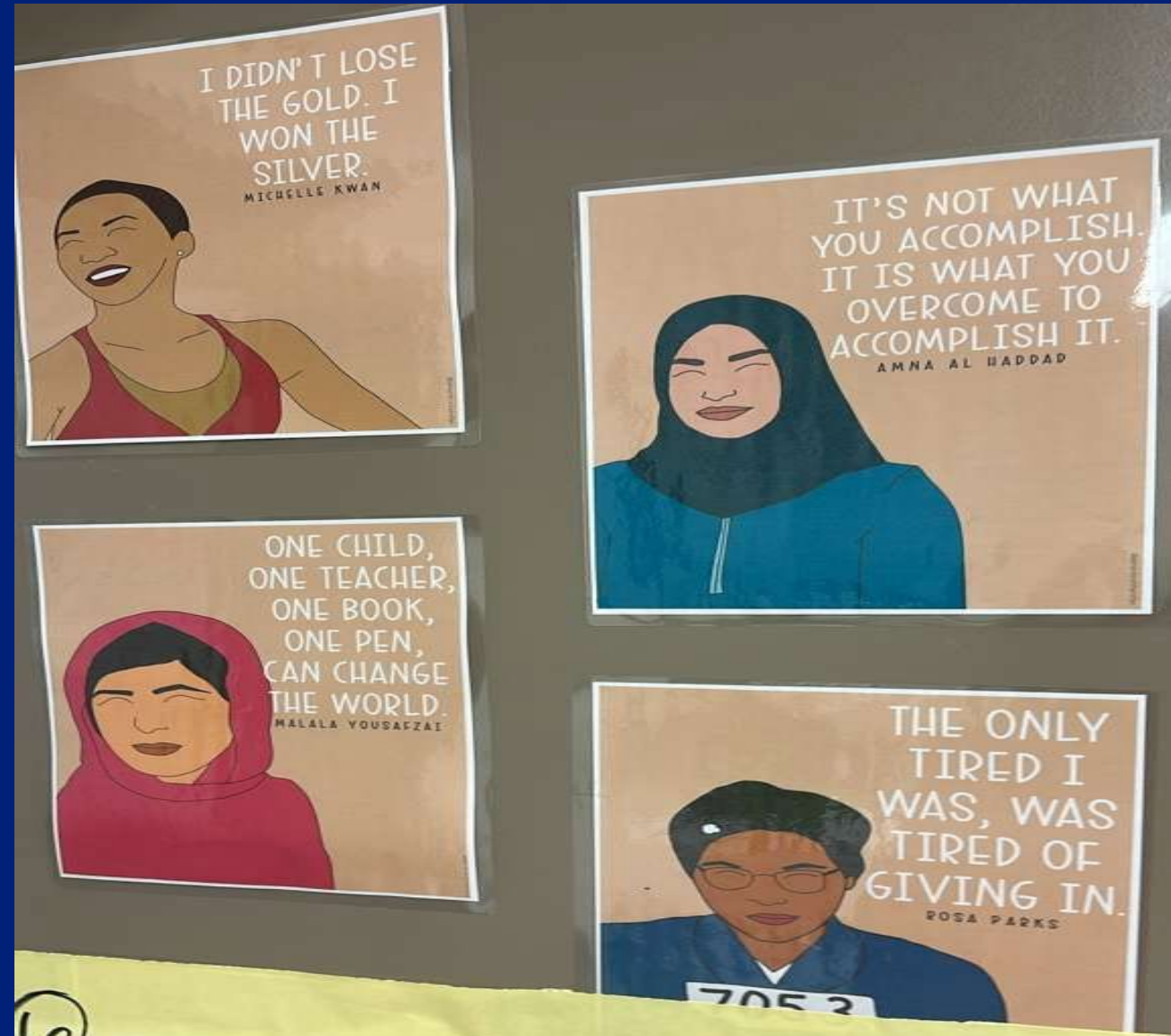


Ms. Reihaan Khan

5th Grade Teacher, Porter Ranch
Community School (PRCS)

Grounding the Conversation

- What we are discussing is **belonging**, not an extra program
- Belonging is built into **daily classroom experiences**
- Strong systems of belonging support **all students**



What Belonging Means

- Students feel safe showing up as their **full selves**
- Identity is **recognized**, not ignored or treated as a problem
- Students know their needs are **respected**

What I Observed

Muslim students faced **unique stress**, especially during Ramadan with concerns about:

- Prayer
- Standing out (“othering”)
- Asking for accommodations (PE, homework, etc)

*Stress impacted **focus and emotional wellbeing***

English ▾

800L ▾



View as student



Assign

INFORMATION

The Muslim Holy Month of Ramadan



Assignment builder ⓘ

Assignment title *

The Muslim Holy Month of Ramadan

Instructions

[+ Add instructions](#)

Activities ^

[Annotations](#) View

[Student Poll](#)

[Checks for Understanding](#) View

[Guided Highlighting](#)

[Graphic Organizers](#) View

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

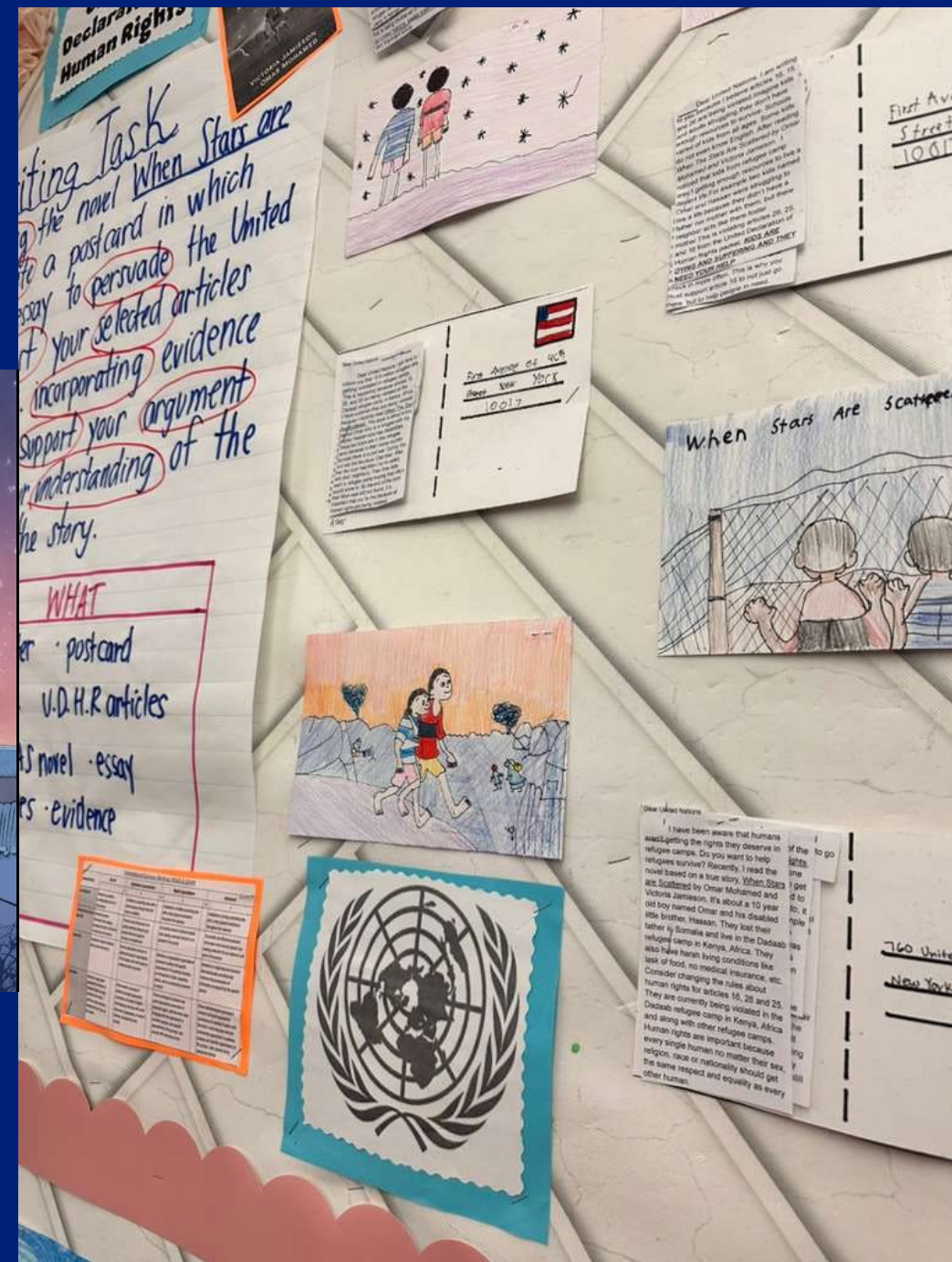
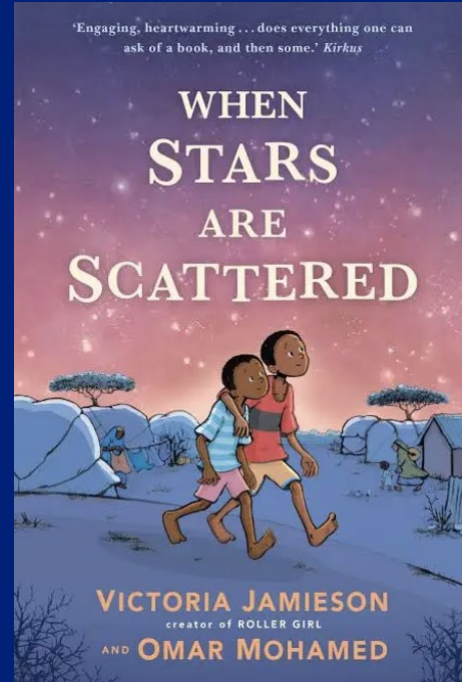
[Quiz: 2 reading skills](#) View

Why This Matters for Everyone

Supports for Muslim students benefit:

- Immigrant students
- Students of color
- Students of faith and non-faith
- Students experiencing fear, grief, or uncertainty

Inclusive design helps everyone thrive



Creating a Prayer Space

Collaborated with school to create a **prayer space**

Not special treatment—**removing a barrier**

Allowed students to focus on **learning, not logistics**



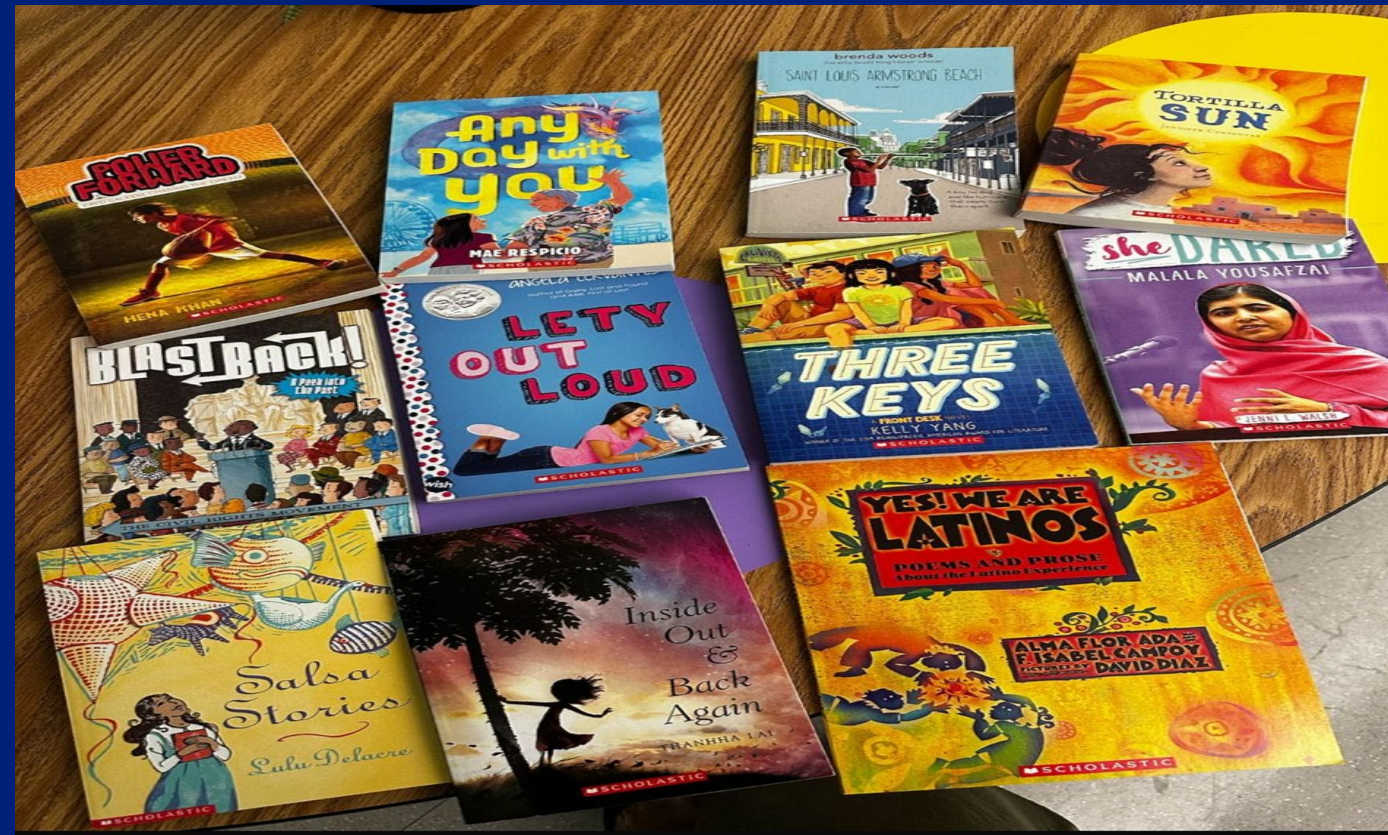
Representation in Curriculum

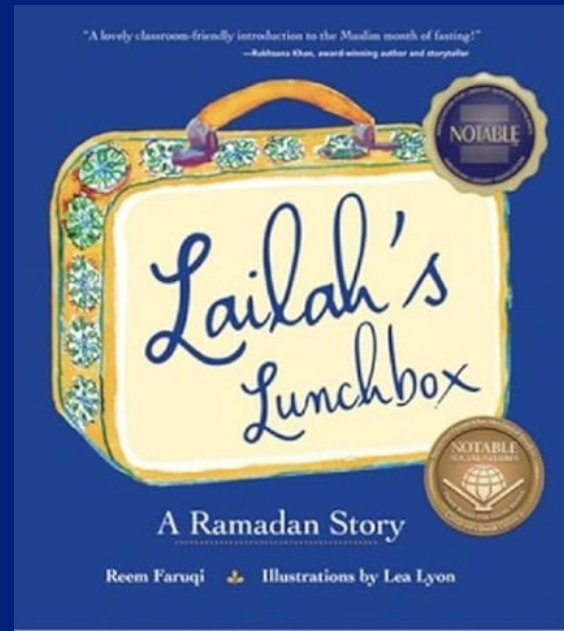
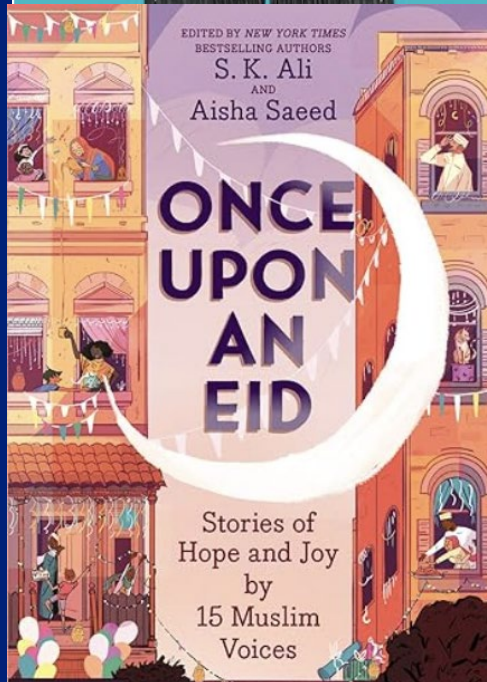
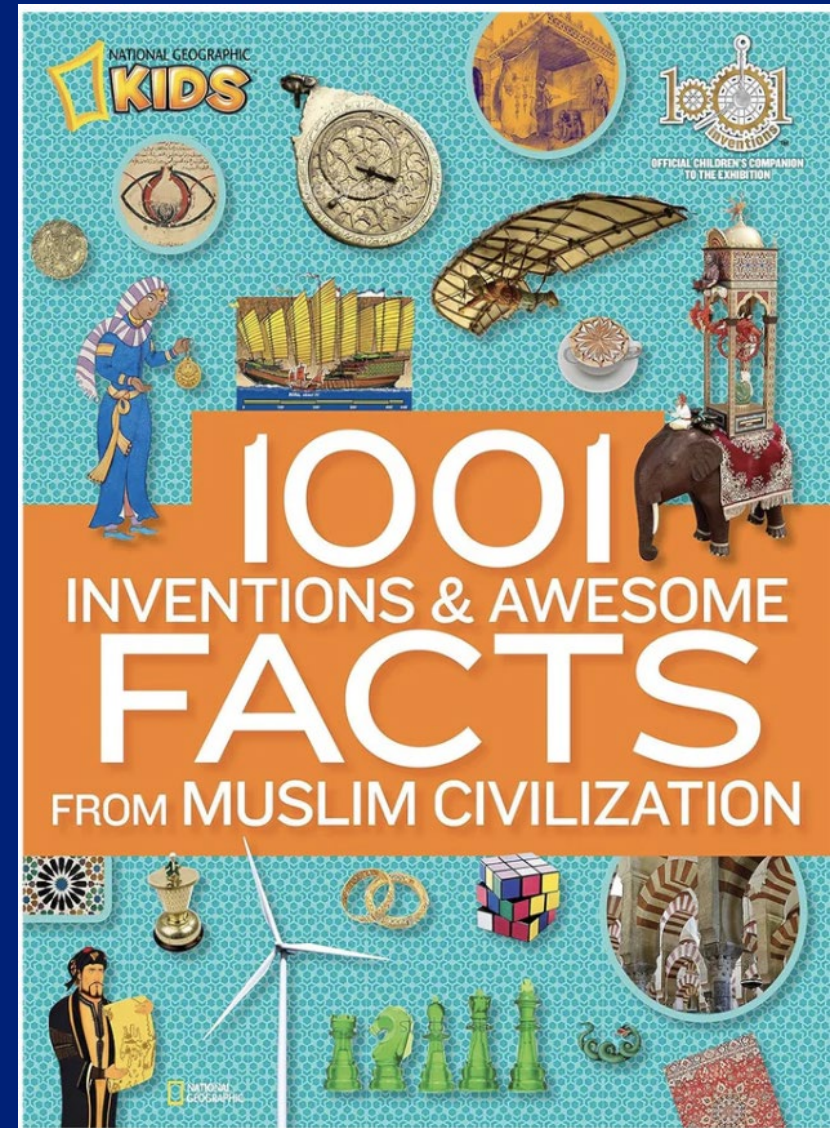
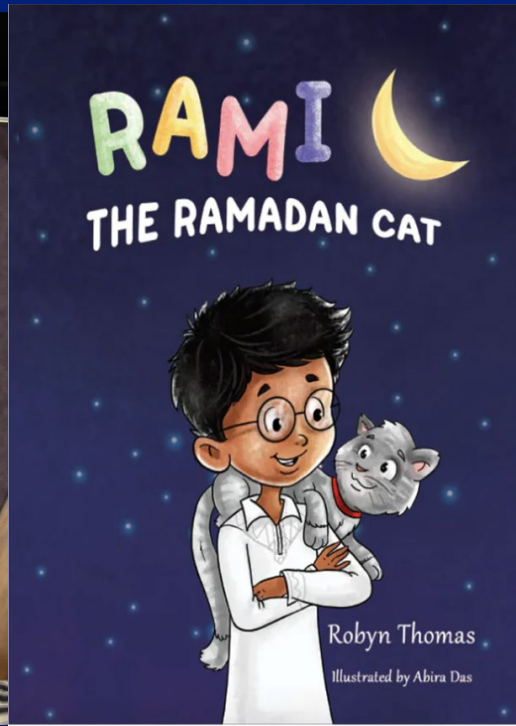
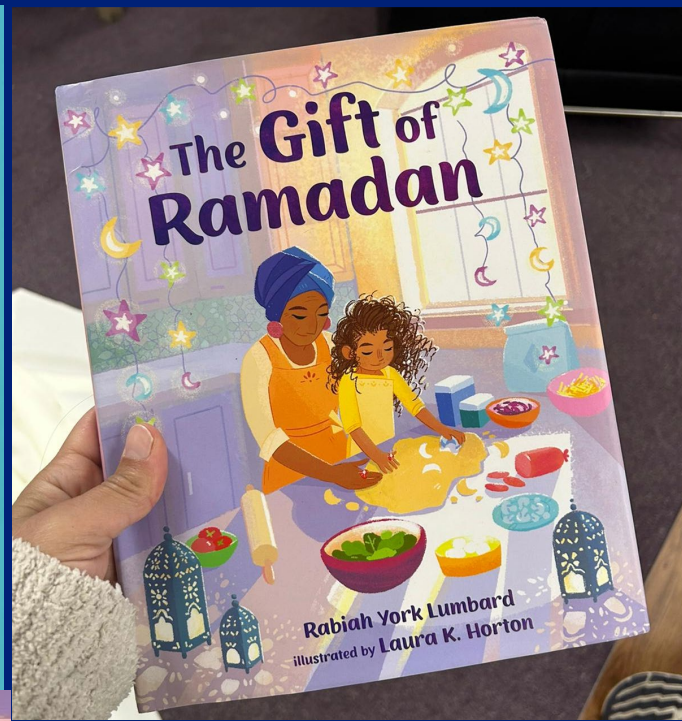
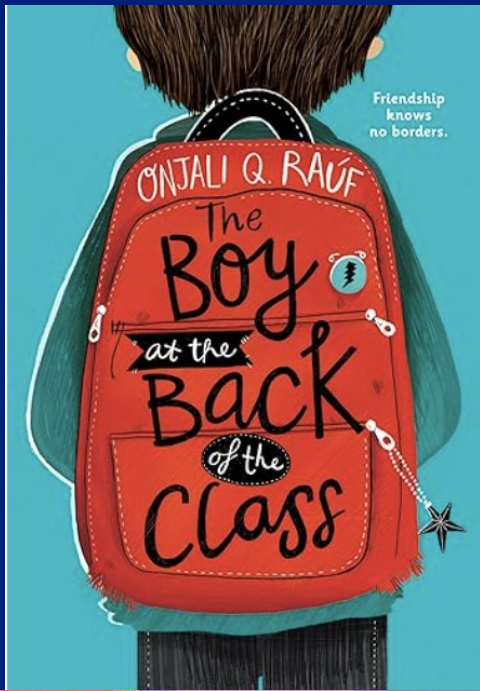
Intentional inclusion of **Muslim books and stories**

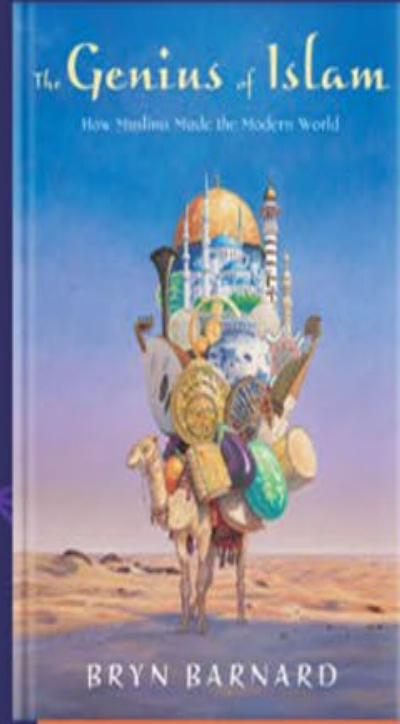
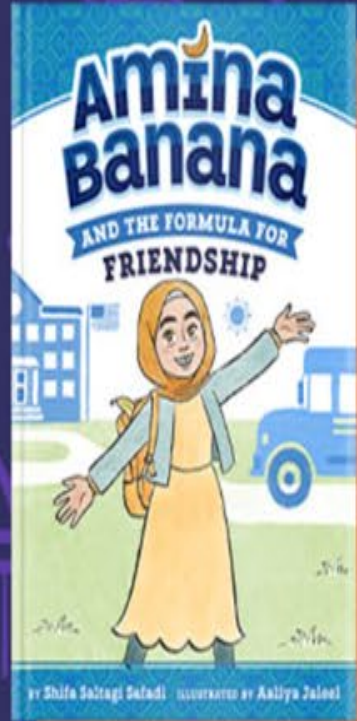
Same approach used for:

- Black students
- Latino students
- Immigrant students
- LGBTQIA+ students
- Diverse family structures

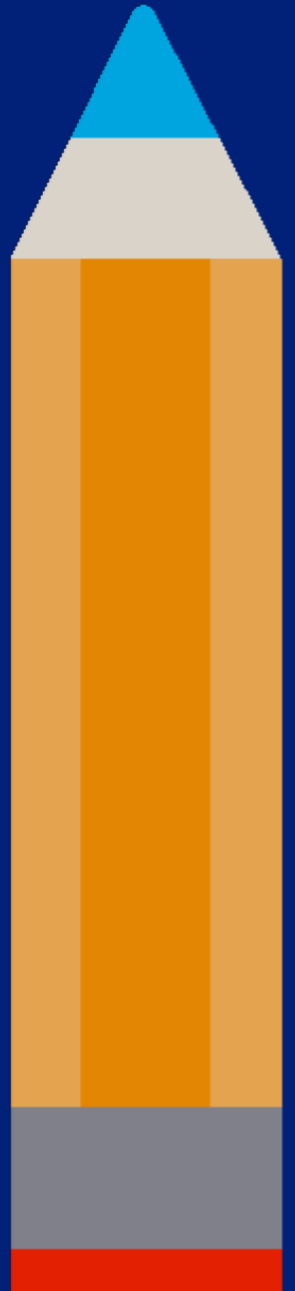
Representation = **belonging**







Recommendations for LAUSD: Supporting Muslim Identity, History, and Student Well- Being in This Critical Moment



LAUSD Officially Recognizing Ramadan



LAUSD Students Thank Karla Griego for Ramadan Recognition



Recommendation 1:

District-Level Ramadan Notification

District sends principals a brief Ramadan notice with dates and key impacts to share with staff, ensuring consistency across schools.



Recommendation 2:

Centralized Resource Links

Include direct links to ready-to-use, standards-aligned Ramadan resources, making inclusion easy and accessible for busy teachers.



Recommendation 3: Advance Planning

Share Ramadan dates early each year to support proactive planning; I'm happy to assist with advance coordination.



THANK YOU!

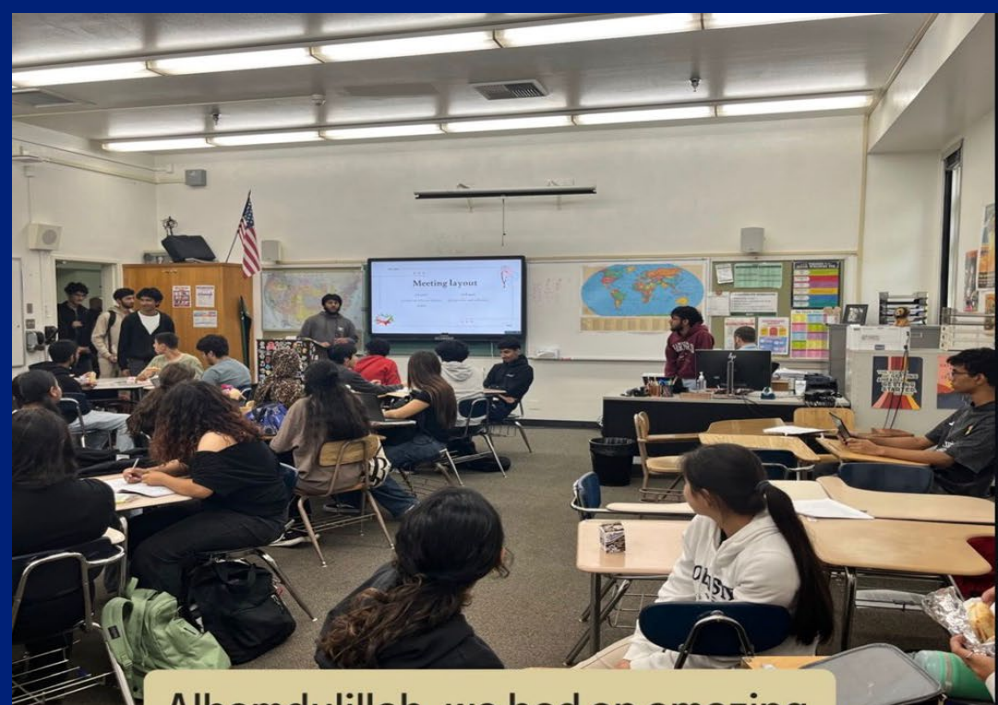


Student Voice: Tala – Leadership, MSA & Mentorship



Tala Sultan

UCLA Community School K-12

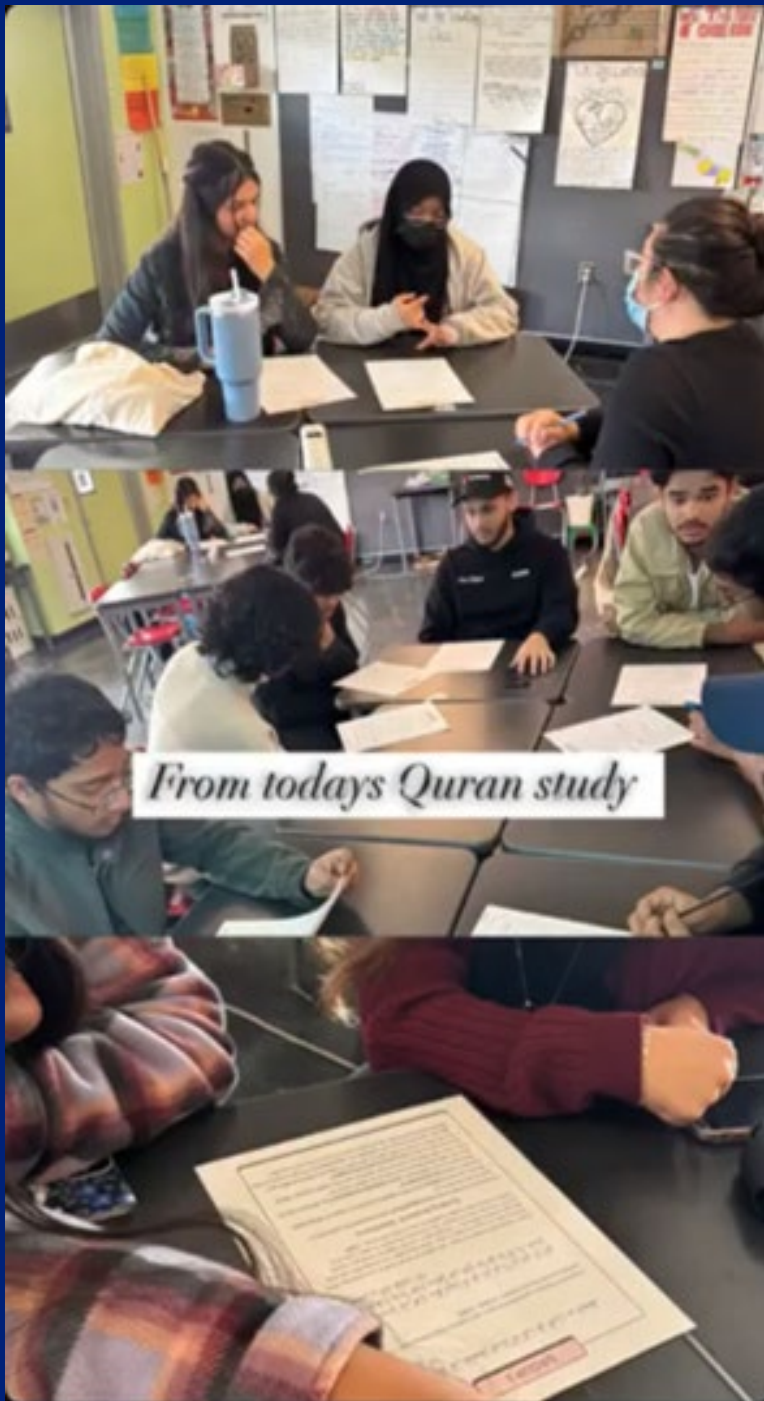


Alhamdulillah, we had an amazing first meeting, thank you all who showed up.

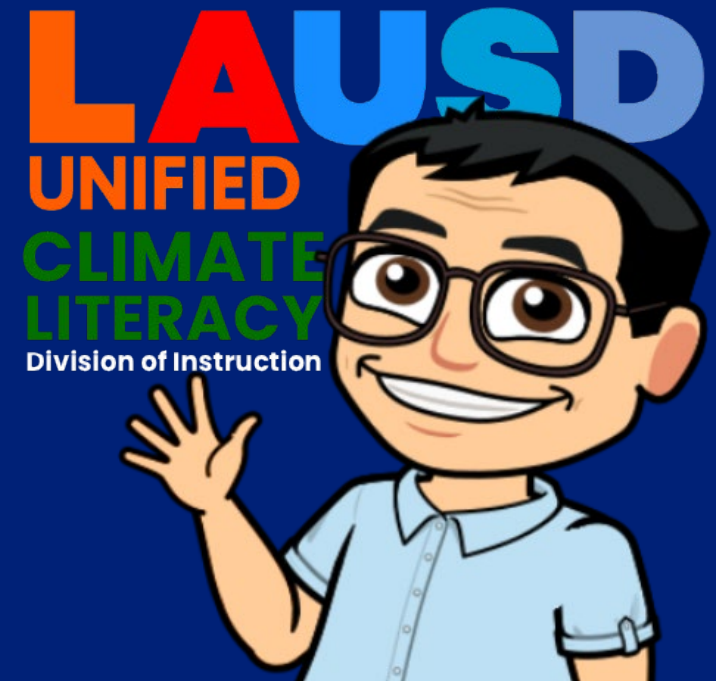


MSA mentorship connects students with Muslim college mentors, reinforcing that their identity is a strength — not a barrier — in higher education.





Institutionalizing Belonging Through Student Leadership and Climate Support



THANK YOU!

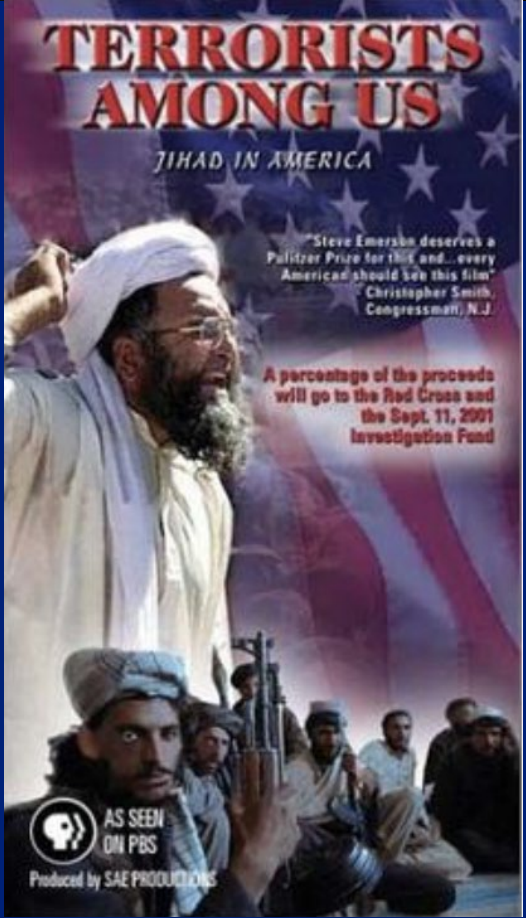


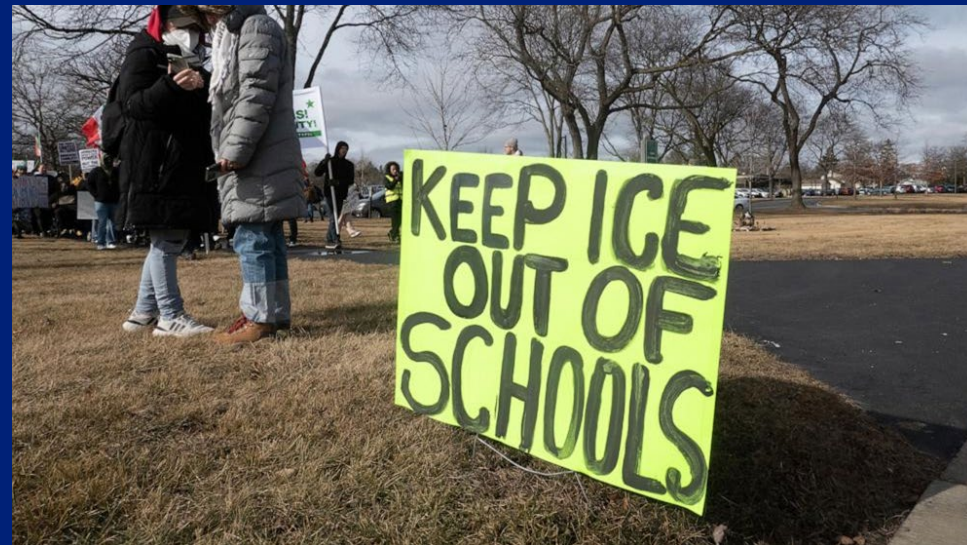
Student Voice: Eshmam – Inclusive Curriculum & Belonging



Eshmam Reja

UCLA Community School K-12



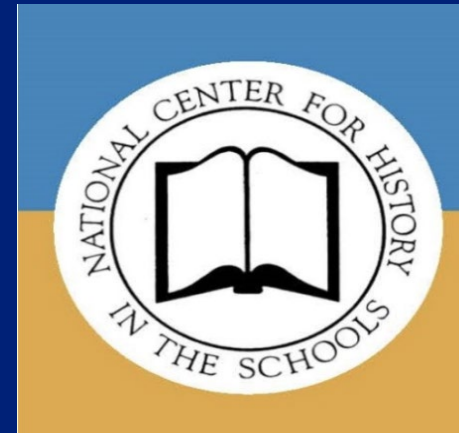




Hate does not begin with violence.
It begins with ignorance.

Scaling How Schools and Educators Can Uplift Muslim Identity, History, and Joy

Professional development by established organizations like ING, Muslim Civic Coalition, CPHB, on Muslim American identity and culturally responsive curriculum.



For K-12 Educators, Colleges and Universities



Inclusion and Belonging Training for Educators in K-12 Schools



Schedule a Training



Learn More



Dynamic Training To Foster Inclusive Classrooms

^ Combating Islamophobia in Education

^ Supporting Religious Diversity in Schools

^ Supporting Ethnic and Racial Diversity in Schools



Unconscious Bias

Explores the historical roots of stereotypes and assumptions about various religious and racialized groups.



Calls to Action: Combating Biases

Presents actionable strategies to address both interpersonal and institutional biases, fostering a more inclusive environment where everyone feels a sense of belonging.



Cultural Competency

Highlights key insights speakers want the audience to understand about their group, along with best practices for effective and respectful interaction.

Impact of Islamophobia: Muslim Experiences



A recent UC Berkeley report found:

- 94% of Muslim Americans say Islamophobia affects their well-being
- 68% have experienced Islamophobia with higher rates for American-born, young adults, and women (~ 80%)
- 88% censor their speech or actions for fear of how people might react to them

Muslim Immigrants to America



Tomb of Hi Jolly, camel driver for the army in 1856.

~ First Wave: Late-1800s–early 1900s



"Mother Mosque" built in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1934.

~ Second Wave: after World War I (1918)



Fazlur Rahman Khan designed Hancock Building and Willis Tower in Chicago.

~ Third Wave: after World War II (1945)



Dr. Ahmed Zewail received 1999 Nobel Prize in Chemistry.

~ Fourth Wave: 1965–1990



Anesa Kajtzovic, former Iowa State Representative.

~ Fifth Wave: 1990–present

Famous Muslim Americans



Top, left to right: Aasif Mandvi, actor and comedian; Ibtihaj Muhammad, Olympic athlete; Fareed Zakaria, host of CNN's *Fareed Zakaria GPS*; Abbas Hamad, 'Bas,' rapper; Iman Vellani played Kamala Khan, or Ms. Marvel; and DJ Khaled, rapper and inspirational speaker. Bottom, left to right: Bella Hadid, model; Hasan Minhaj, comedian and actor; Dave Chappelle, comedian and actor; Anma Nawaz, Chief Correspondent for *PBS NewsHour*; Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, retired NBA star player; and Mona Haydar, rapper and public figure.

Muslim Holidays



Eid ul-Fitr

"Festival of Breaking the Fast"
Celebrated at the end of Ramadan

Eid ul-Adha

"Festival of the Sacrifice"
Celebrated during the time of *Hajj*

Student Voice: Sameer – Religious Accommodations



Sameer Sourav

UCLA Community School K-12

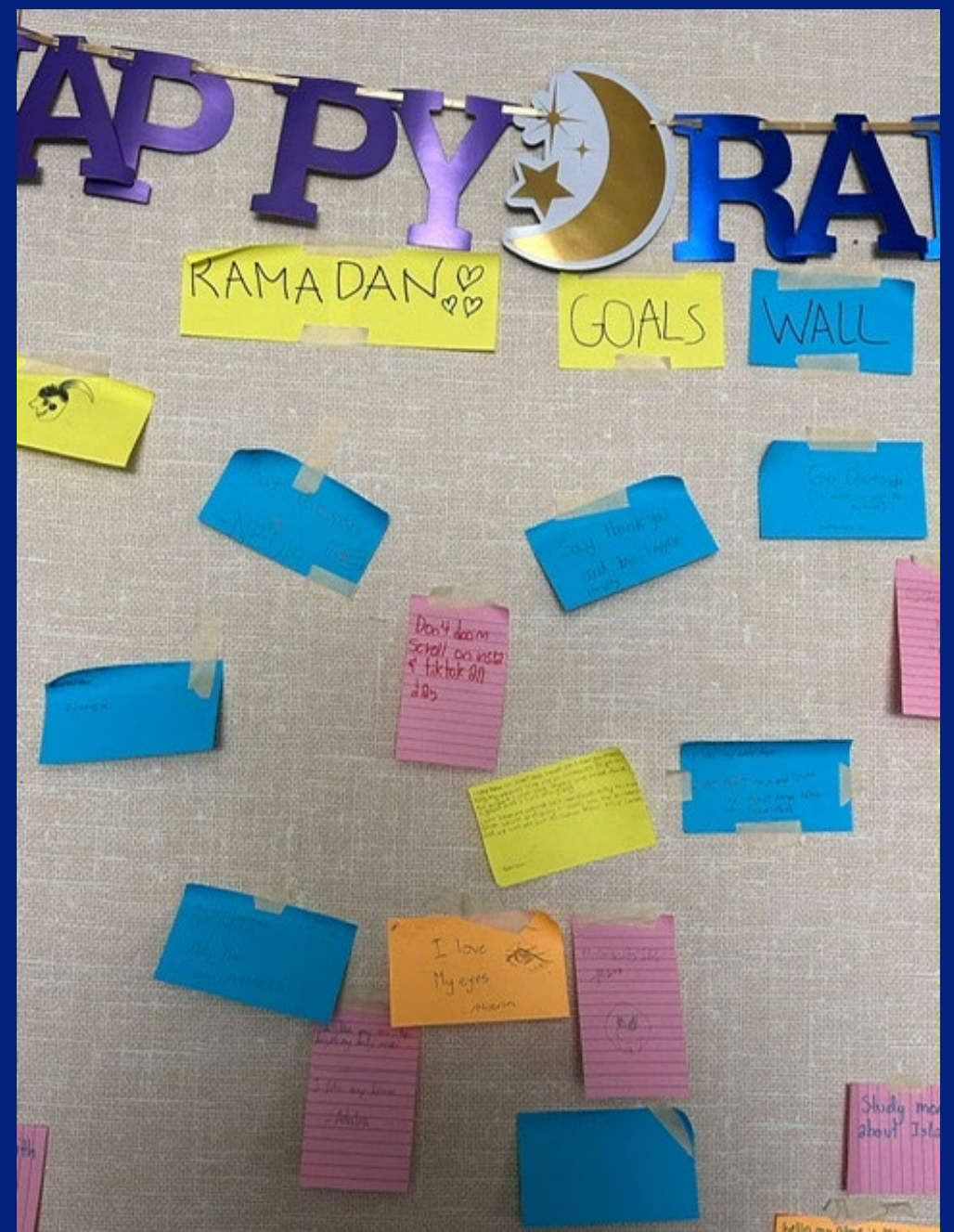
When Safety Means Hiding Who You Are





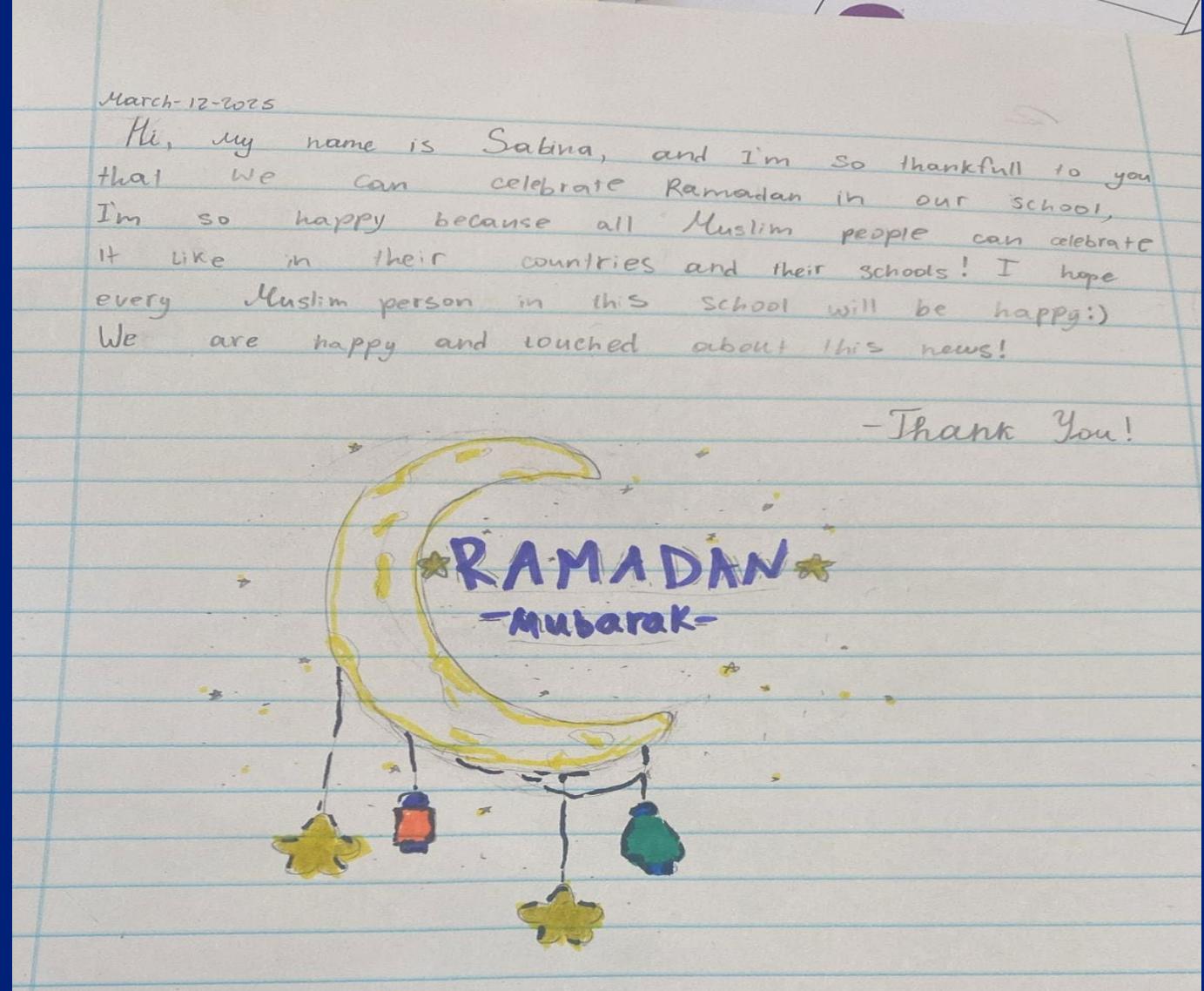
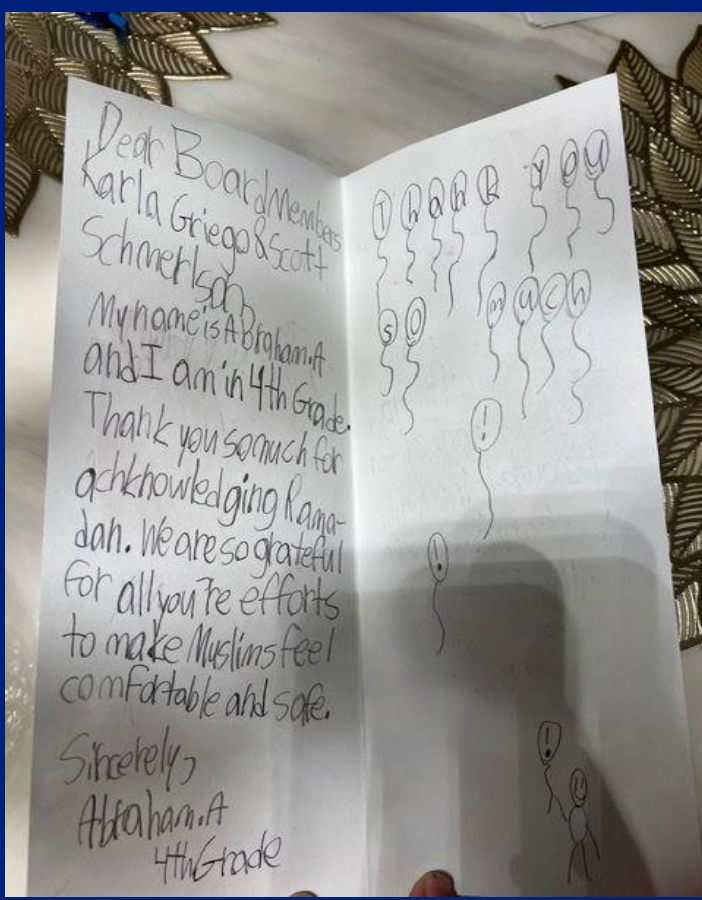


Alhamdulillah, great turn out at
Jumma! Every friday, at Lunch
in L11



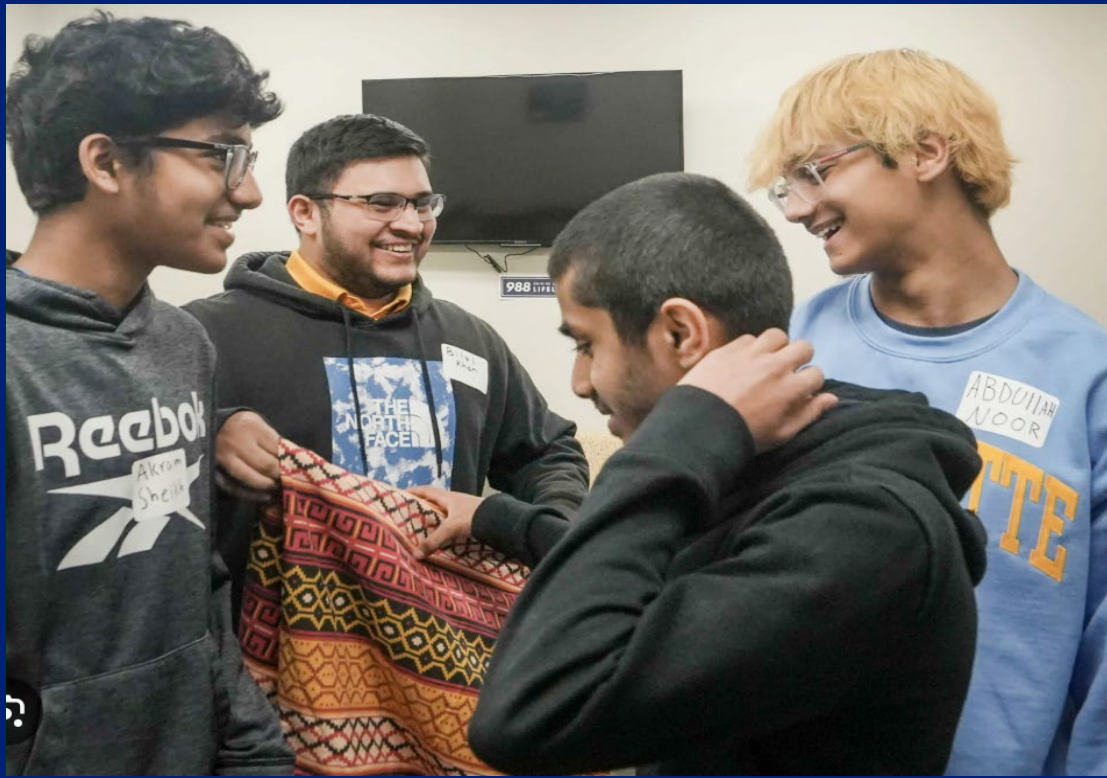
LAUSD Board Unanimously Votes To Celebrate & Recognize Ramadan





“Dear Board Member Karla Griego and Scott Schmerelson, My name is Abraham and I am in the 4th grade. Thank you so much for acknowledging Ramadan. We are so grateful for all your efforts to make Muslims feel comfortable and safe”

“My name is Sabrina and I am so thankful to you that we can celebrate Ramadan in our school. Thank you”



TO-GO MEALS AVAILABLE
FOR STUDENTS
WHO OBSERVE RAMADAN



Inclusive Spaces as Protective Factors for Student Mental Health



Fiaz Zubair Syed
Psychiatric Social Worker (PSW)
Cleveland Charter High School

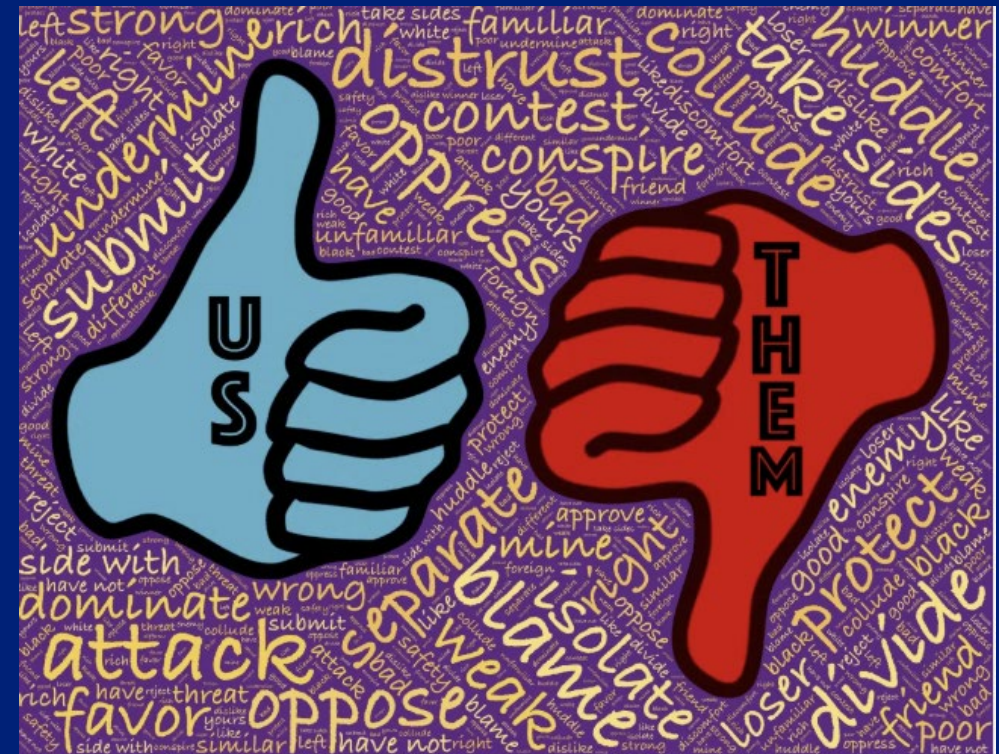
IDENTITY FORMATION

WHERE DO **I** BELONG?

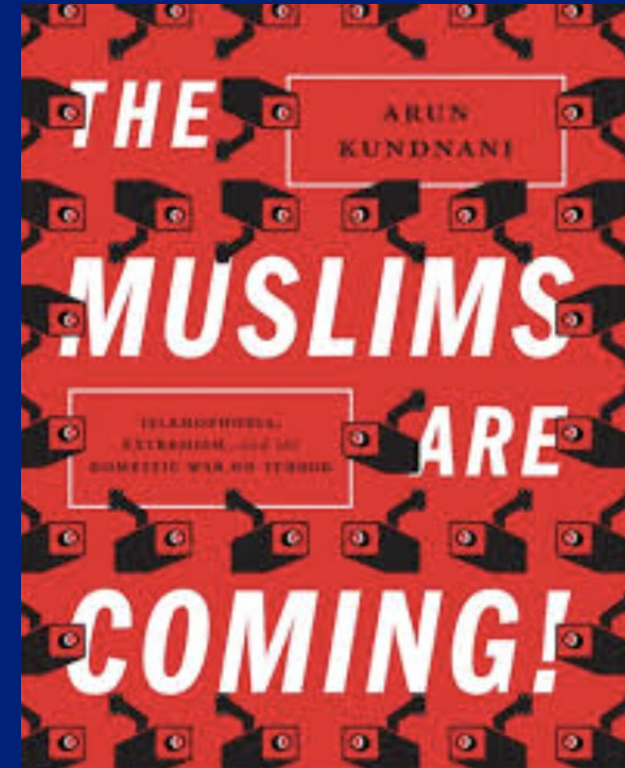


WHO AM **i**?

WHY ACCURATE REPRESENTATION MATTERS



The Hidden Impact of Islamophobia on Students





RAMADAN IS COMING!

WHAT FACULTY NEED TO KNOW ABOUT RAMADAN AND HOW IT AFFECTS STUDENTS:

- Ramadan is the Muslim month of fasting. Practicing Muslim students will be fasting from dawn until dusk (approx. 4:30AM to 8:30PM).
- Fasting means no food and **NO WATER**. (Also no smoking.)
- Ramadan celebrations often involve gatherings and prayers late into the night.
- It's not unusual to be up past midnight for prayers and then get up at 3:30-4am to eat before dawn.

Muslim students may be hungry, tired, and dehydrated, especially if they're in your class late in the afternoon.

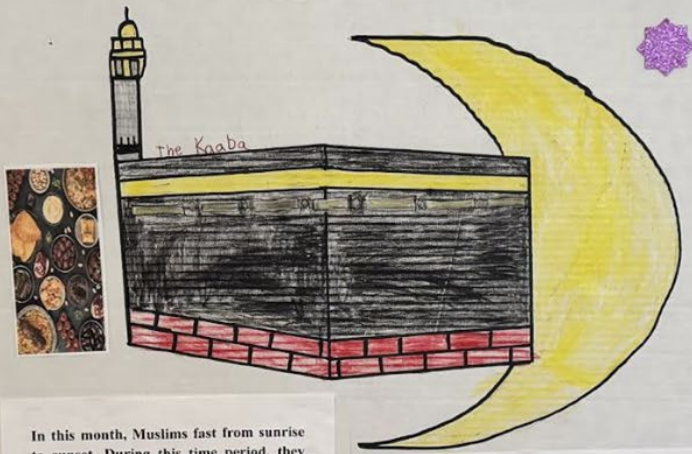


RAMADAN



What is Islam?

Islam is one of the three monotheistic, Abrahamic religions. In English, Islam means submission to the will of God. A Muslim is someone who accepts Islam as their way of life by submitting to God through peace. When Muslims greet each other, they say Assalamu-Alaikum (Assal-am-oo-ah-lay-kum) which means "May Peace Be Upon You."



Eid al-Fitr

Also known as the "little Eid." Eid al-Fitr is the Eid that comes right after Ramadan. It lasts a total of three days, but it is mostly celebrated on the first day. The day begins with a special prayer in congregation, the celebration continues with meeting and feasting with family and friends in ones finest attire.

The Five Pillars

The five pillars of Islam are fundamental practices in Islam, considered to be obligatory acts of worships for all Muslims:

1. Declaration of Faith (Shahada)
2. Salah (Prayer 5 times a day)
3. Sawm (Fasting in Ramadan)
4. Zakat (Charity)
5. Hajj (Pilgrimage)

In this month, Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset. During this time period, they cannot eat or drink anything.



Ramadan is the holiest month in the Islamic calendar. Muslims practice Ramadan to increase their closeness to God. Muslims also fast during Ramadan to help themselves remember the less fortunate, and to work on self-control.

Ramadan happens during the 9th month of the Islamic calendar. People who are sick, old, weak, traveling, and children do not have to fast.



Eid-al-Adha

This is known as the "big Eid." It marks the end of Hajj, a sacred pilgrimage that is required for every able (physically and financially) Muslim once in their lifetime. This holiday commemorates the faith and obedience of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham). He was commanded by God to sacrifice His son. A sheep from heaven was sent down to take his place, and instead the sheep was sacrificed. Eid-al-Adha is started as a special prayer. Then, Muslims re-enact this event in history by sacrificing an animal and distributing it among family, friends and the poor.

Traditions

On these days, Muslims give gifts, money, and lots of candy. They usually have a big feast with family, friends and their community after the Eid prayer. It's a very happy time for everyone especially children. They also give charity to those in need.

Ramadan: Inclusive Values That Benefit All Students

- Reflection & Self-Discipline
- Kindness, Patience & Forgiveness
- Gratitude & Service
- Mercy for All
- Withholding Judgment
- Standing Against Injustice
- Universal Classroom Values

Belonging by Design, Not by Chance

