

**Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Schools and Classrooms  
Profile Series**



*This series of profiles highlights programs, schools, and districts that are leading efforts in Massachusetts to establish [Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Schools and Classrooms](#). Other profiles in this series can be accessed [here](#).*

In 2012-2013, Holyoke Public Schools was earning national headlines, and not in a good way. The graduation rate across its two high schools was 54 percent, and the suspension rate was 22 percent. Recognizing things needed to change, the administration was open to ideas. Two new culturally responsive initiatives were developed by teachers and staff that, today, are having an impact on students' experience: Pa'lante, which focuses on restorative justice practices, and an Ethnic Studies program. Both of these programs were created by teachers and/or staff members, and have grown to have an impact on the culture across the school and within the community.

**PA'LANTE**

Seeing the impact of the existing disciplinary system, Luke Woodward, then a therapist in the school-based teen clinic reached out to the school administration to start a committee to look into alternative systems. "We were coming under a lot of scrutiny, so the administration was very open to considering alternatives," Woodward, now the Director of [Pa'lante](#), explains. A group of teachers, counselors, and students came together to consider other models, and recommended restorative justice. The following year, the group received a grant to begin training in restorative justice. "We met every other week, we did readings on restorative justice, and the following year we implemented circles in every advisory period – it was not successful," Woodward explains. "Our rationale was good – let's first use this as a community building tool, so everyone is used to it in a positive context. In reality, we had over 100 teachers doing something new that they weren't used to and some weren't invested in."

*"The name Pa'lante is a reference to the Young Lords, who were a group of young people of color, primarily Puerto Ricans, who worked to address racism, police injustice, poor health care, and tenants' rights in in the sixties and seventies. Their legacy reminds us that anything is possible when young people of color organize for change. "Pa'lante", which means "moving forward!", was the name of Young Lords' newspaper." – [Pa'lante Website](#)*

Still committed to incorporating restorative justice into the school community, Woodward received a grant through Youth At Risk to create a youth-led restorative justice program. "That was really the beginning of what we have now, Pa'lante," Woodward says. Woodward worked with teachers across Holyoke High School to recruit 15 students to participate in a summer training program, hoping to attract students from a variety of backgrounds and with different levels of engagement in the school community. "We wanted a diverse group in every sense, and we were able to get a lot of different segments of the school community represented," explains Woodward. The selected students were paid in gift cards for \$10/hour for the training to provide an incentive to try out the program and give up some of their summer.

The summer training focused on political education, helping students to think about their experience in schools and understand the history of young people organizing for change. "We wanted them to start seeing themselves as agents for change," Woodward explains.

When the school year began again, the student leaders worked with the school administration to offer restorative justice as an alternative to the traditional discipline system. Katelyn, a 12<sup>th</sup> grade student leader, explains, "If you have a conflict, the immediate place you're sent is the Behavioral Support Team. They are geared towards discipline and suspension. We have help from the principals to recognize that Pa'lante is in place and they can give you a referral to

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us.” Woodward adds, “As an optional alternative to the traditional system it works better. If a student doesn’t want to participate, that’s fine, they can go through the traditional system.”

Once a referral comes in, Woodward or another staff member gain an initial understanding of the situation and meet with the peer leaders to identify who would be the best fit to lead the indigenous circle. Involved students then meet with the peer leaders to plan their circle and identify who will join. Woodward explains, “Anyone related to the situation – teachers, counselors, administrators, brothers, sisters, friends... We identify them as we’re preparing. We also say to the students at the center, ‘Who is a support person that brings out the best in you?’ And that might be grandma or it might be the school adjustment counselor.”

In the conflict circle, all of the participants, including the youth leaders and any participating staff members, sit in a circle. A talking piece is passed around to ensure that every voice is heard. “[It is passed] to the left, because that is closest to the heart,” Katelyn explains. She adds, “We work to build trust and establish the values of the circle.” Nashley, another 12<sup>th</sup> grade youth leader, adds, “The questions build up. They start basic with ‘Why are you here?’ and they build to get deeper and more personal depending on the issue. We get to the root of the problem.” Once a resolution or plan is reached by the circle, Nashley says, “It doesn’t just stop there – if it is something that might come up again we work to establish whether there should be a follow up circle and create a plan at the end.”

“It is restorative but we also think of it as transformative. It is a different way of disciplining, to keep in mind the aspect of there being consequences for actions. You build a plan, you do things you don’t want to do. This is how to break the school to prison pipeline – by creating alternatives to the consequences in place.”

– Katelyn, 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Pa’lante Student Leader

At the outset, some teachers resisted restorative justice. “They thought we were advocating for no consequences,” Woodward says. Nashley adds, “Teachers would mock circle practices, identifying us as the place where you go to just talk about your feelings. They used to belittle the work we do.” Even for those staff members who supported restorative justice, Woodward explains, “The old system is such an ingrained mindset. Even in people open to restorative justice, it is hard to change what you’re doing every day. In the moment, an administrator who supports restorative justice might still act the same way they always have towards students – with less listening, less focus on the root cause of the issue.”

As teachers see an increasing number of students have positive experiences with Pa’lante, the youth leaders are seeing perspectives change. “Now, some are taking responsibility for the fact that they are working in a space where Latinos and black students are not represented fully. They are starting to take responsibility and own up to their stuff and accept this is a useful alternative,” Katelyn says. Nashley adds, “There’s a lot more support this year in particular.

We have a lot of newer teachers who aren’t as aware of the way things have always been, so there’s a greater sense of openness.”

Of the students who are referred to Pa’lante, Woodward estimates that 75-80 percent choose to participate. Nashley explains, “Some students go into it thinking it is dumb or irrelevant, but it is better than telling their mom they got suspended or expelled.” Katelyn adds, “Even if they go into it thinking it is dumb, they get something out of it, whether that is a conversation with the person they were in conflict with or accountability with their teachers.” Woodward adds, “For students who participate in circles for conflict, I’ve really seen them grow. Just this week, a student came in to prepare and was mad, talked about escalating things and fighting. In the circle, she wanted to handle it the right way, to show she’s growing up and take responsibility, see this end. It was great to say ‘look how you just grew up’ and acknowledge it at the end.” According to Pa’lante’s Annual Report, during the 2018-2019 school year their 144 circles helped prevent 201 days of suspension. Ninety-three percent of cases that involved violence resulted in no further violence, and 94 percent of circle participants report that the circle resolved the situation.

Today, Pa’lante’s mission is to “*build youth power, center student voice, and organize for school discipline and educational policies and practices that actively dismantle the school to prison pipeline.*” As Katelyn explains, “It is

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restorative but we also think of it as transformative. It is a different way of disciplining, to keep in mind the aspect of there being consequences for actions. You build a plan, you do things you don't want to do. This is how to break the school to prison pipeline – by creating alternatives to the consequences in place.”

For Pa'lante's student leaders, the impact they are having through conflict circles is just a small piece of their experience. Woodward explains that, to transform the student experience and disrupt the school to prison pipeline, it is important to understand the root cause of disciplinary issues. “Youth organizing is a lot to ask of schools that are struggling, but it is so important, even if it is just students helping leaders understand the root causes of what's happening. When there is a student conflict with a teacher – it isn't just that students want to fight – what are the dynamics of race, age, and the larger system in the school?” Each year, Pa'lante organizes a Youth Participatory Action Research project (YPAR) to better understand and support social justice in their school community. Woodward adds, “In some way, you need to be working with students to transform the larger systemic issues in the school. If you're not addressing those larger systemic issues, you are just acting as a band aid.” Katelyn adds, “The circle part of it is more of an add on or bonus to the social justice work. It develops in different themes at the beginning of each year – what will our focus be? We are seeking social justice in our school but also wanting a domino effect to the city of Holyoke.”

One of their first YPAR projects led the Pa'lante team to transform the In-School Suspension (ISS) room into a Student Support Room (SSR). “When it was ISS, students would be sent here and had to sit in their desk and be silent. They had no space to process things that had happened,” Katelyn explains. Now, in addition to a circle of desks at the center of the room, there are couches, chairs, and mats set up in the corners of the room. Student leaders staff the room as part of an internship period throughout the day, and are available to talk with their peers about issues coming up in the classroom. “Students can ask or teachers can suggest taking a few minutes' break in the SSR, to have some space or talk with one of the youth leaders about what is happening,” Katelyn says.

In 2017-2018, Pa'lante's YPAR focused on representation in the school community. Youth leaders surveyed and interviewed students and teachers about racism and representation, and inventoried ways students were and were not represented. While over 80 percent of students identify as persons of color, 69 percent of posters, murals, and other displays at the high school represented white individuals. “We also noticed that most of the pictures involving people of color showed them in subjugated positions – slavery or internment camps. That is an important piece of history, but it isn't inspiring to students. It doesn't say to them that they can be up there one day, that they will do something great,” Katelyn explains.

To address the lack of representation, the 2018-2019 YPAR focused on identifying [Paper City Hidden Legends](#) and creating a permanent installation of their photographs and biographies in the high school. “The goal was to learn about our community and history. We want it to be a hall of fame reflecting the diversity and values that are important to use to increase representation and hopefully serve as a teaching tool.”

The student leaders solicited nominations and recommendations for who to include as a Hidden Legend, and conducted interviews and research to decide the finalists. “We had to ask difficult questions – What does social justice mean? What work is included? Can a young person be a legend? And what are the limits to celebrating individual legends when we know this work isn't individual?” a student leader explained at their recent celebration. “Some of our final choices are considered controversial, but if it involves challenging the status quo can you create a social justice hall of fame that isn't controversial?” The twenty-five Hidden Legends that were selected range in age, experience, and background, but have all had an impact on the children of Holyoke.

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– Luke Woodward, Pa'lante Director

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Pa'lante student leaders also run trainings and workshops for other schools and districts. "We advocate [for] and promote restorative justice in other schools. We talk about what we do, run a circle, and educate about what this practice looks like. We hope we'll create a domino effect in other schools," Nashley explains. "Our whole purpose is social justice – it is about racism and about students not feeling represented in their school. That's messed up and we need to do something about it."

"We really embrace the culture that is in our school. We try to make it feel like every identity is supported by Pa'lante, no matter where you're from or what you like, you're supported here," Nashley says. Pa'lante is working to better incorporate the broader Holyoke community in its work, through *Hidden Legends* and through other events. Woodward says, "We hold community social justice movie nights to engage families and the community. We have a quick spiel about the program, feed people dinner, and have a more fun kind of night engaging with these issues." Nashley is seeing indications that Pa'lante's work is having an impact on the larger community in Holyoke. "From what I've been seeing in the community, there is more and more representation: more murals with the Puerto Rican flag and fists being held up. We're kind of waking people up and making them realize what it means to be in a community, a real community."

Woodward credits the success of the program to having it be youth-led and optional. "Modeling another adult doing circles – is that transformative?" he asks. "After our first year, when we unsuccessfully embedded it in advisory, we learned that restorative circles shouldn't be forced on anyone. [Embedding it] was forcing folks to lead and to participate. Now, it is an optional alternative." Nashley adds that it is important to ensure the practices are driven and shaped by the school community. "Depending on your community, there may be different issues. Representing students in their schools is the most important part of this. It wouldn't be a school without the students, and we don't want to be in an environment where we're harassed or discriminated against. It's all about the students, and you need to understand their experience [to make this work.]"

He suggests that other schools trying restorative justice "Start small – pilot it first and call it a pilot. Don't say we're implementing this new big thing that will change everything. Start small and learn from it." Nashley agrees, saying, "In the beginning of the program, we had a broad idea that we wanted to end racism. We all want to end racism and sexism, but realistically we have to take steps."

## ETHNIC STUDIES PROGRAM

Back in 2013-14 a cohort of middle school teachers from across Holyoke Public Schools (HPS) identified a lack of student representation in the curriculum. Dana Altshuler, then one of the middle school teachers (now Ethnic Studies Director), explained that "we were noticing low engagement, absenteeism, and high rates of disciplinary referrals." Prior to coming to HPS, Altshuler briefly worked in SFUSD (San Francisco Unified School District) as part of a pilot group of educators, introducing an Ethnic Studies course for 9th graders in the district. Having experienced the impact of the Ethnic Studies program in that context, Altshuler and the HPS middle school teacher cohort wondered how Ethnic Studies content and pedagogy could improve results and experiences for young folks in Holyoke. That was 6 years ago, when this project to bring Ethnic Studies to Holyoke began. Back in 2014, Altshuler, who is now the Ethnic Studies Director, and a group of five Social Studies teachers co-created a pilot course for 8<sup>th</sup> grade Ethnic Studies to be taught in all 8th grade Social Studies classrooms district-wide. Across the board, "we noticed that more students were engaging in our classes." Altshuler explained that, "one year later, data from our pilot program at the high school in 2015-16 showed that we had increased attendance rates and lowered behavioral referrals for students in our Ethnic courses. Since then, we have grown our program to extend from 7-12 grade and developed partnerships with surrounding colleges and universities to support a robust pathway for students and to provide quality Professional Development experiences for Ethnic Studies teachers in our growing cohort."

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As the program developed, the HPS Ethnic Studies cohort worked closely with community and university partners to stay anchored to the values of Ethnic Studies. Altshuler explained, “If we are doing ethnic studies responsibly, we really need to understand the context of Ethnic Studies as a movement to challenge ‘Status Quo’ approaches to education and we need to be culturally responsive and sustaining by rooting the curriculum in the community.” For instance, the 8th grade curriculum is a case study on U.S Colonialism in Puerto Rico and the ways in which the historical moment of 1898 continues to impact Puerto Ricans both on and off the island. “Eighty plus percent of our students are from Puerto Rico or identify as Diasporican, so this curriculum helps our students to answer: What are the circumstances that led us to Holyoke and how have Puerto Ricans shaped the cultural, historical, and political landscape of Holyoke?” Through Ethnic Studies, schools can and do become a place of belonging for black and brown students-- along with other minoritized youth. In many ways the research in Tucson and now San Francisco over the past two decades is coming to fruition in the small city of Holyoke for a group of 1000 students in grades 7-12.

Today, the middle school Social Studies teachers continue to meet monthly, now also joined by the high school Ethnic Studies teachers. “We model lessons and talk about what it means to be culturally responsive in the classroom. We read academic texts and then try out new skills by building lessons collaboratively,” Altshuler says. For the first several years, professional development was co-facilitated by Dana Altshuler and Ethnic Studies teacher Coryne Legare. Currently, the Ethnic Studies program is working with University of Massachusetts – Amherst. Three professors and a graduate student from the School of Education structure and lead the professional development time. Altshuler explains, “We go out into the community and bring guest speakers in to talk about the history of Holyoke and what it means to be community responsive as teachers in Holyoke.” The teachers also have time to review the Ethnic Studies curriculum and thoughtfully build a cohesive progression from the 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, which has created a unique opportunity for vertical alignment that bridges the middle to high school courses.

The Ethnic Studies courses are also intentionally structured with common routines to ease the transition from middle school to high school. Altshuler explains, “Three years ago on an end of year survey, we asked students which elements of the Ethnic Studies 9<sup>th</sup> grade experience supported their transition to high school. Overwhelmingly, students identified the classroom set up, the binder and word wall systems, and some of the pedagogy used by both their middle and high school Ethnic Studies teachers as supportive to a successful high school transition.”

In 2018-19, two years after the Ethnic Studies Program was expanded to grade nine, Holyoke underwent a transition to unify the two high schools. Today, Holyoke High School is one school with two campuses, Dean Campus and North Campus. At the Dean Campus, all 9<sup>th</sup> graders take Ethnic Studies as their History and English course. History and English teachers co-plan to ensure their courses are aligned. “It is a double whammy for them – two hours a day, all 110 ninth graders are being exposed to rich ideas,” says

### Holyoke Ethnic Studies Program Curriculum (at a glance)

#### **Seventh Grade: Law and Justice**

Looking at the juvenile justice system, the school to prison pipeline, and social movements under the central question: *When does the government have too much power?*

#### **Eighth Grade: United States Colonialism through the Lens of Puerto Rico**

*What are the circumstances that led us to Holyoke and how have Puerto Ricans shaped the cultural, historical, and political landscape of Holyoke?*

#### **Ninth Grade: Three Case Studies**

*Schooling versus Learning: Re-imagining Schools for Liberation*

*Media Literacy: Understanding Race and Gender as social constructs with real consequences*

*Race Matters: Understanding the creation of Race and the legacies of institutionalized slavery in the U.S. and the presence of race in our social institutions today, with a culminating Youth Participatory Action Research project*

#### **Tenth Grade**

Units include Poetry as an Art of Resistance, Oral History and the Power of Storytelling

#### **Eleventh Grade: Leadership**

Study social movements and organize for change in their own communities

#### **Twelfth Grade: Dual Enrollment**

Students take dual enrollment courses in the field, earning up to 12 college credits prior to graduation

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Altshuler. At the larger North Campus, students opt-in to the Ethnic Studies pathway, with both English and History courses. Close to 140 of the approximately 300 ninth grade students choose to participate in the Ethnic Studies Pathway at North Campus. Most of these students have taken 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade courses (see above).

At Dean Campus, in Danielle Hayes' Ethnic Studies History class, students are working to build an interactive timeline of Race in the United States. Each student did research on an individual, event, or structure in relation to Race in America. Once everyone has shared with each other, they hang their research on the interactive timeline. For the remainder of the class, students begin watching the documentary *13<sup>th</sup>*, a film about the intersections of race, justice, and mass incarceration in the United States. The teacher passes out analysis guides for students as she warns them that their "first priority is to take care of ourselves – there are some graphic images that I'll warn you about and you can step out or look away if you need to." As the film begins, Hayes reminds her students that it is about institutional oppression, "this film is looking at impact, not intent. Some of the things weren't intended to be racist, but they had that effect or that impact." When the narrator begins talking about convict leasing, she adds, "they are imposing harsh penalties for things like loitering and vagrancy. Think about it – these people were enslaved, now do they have land? Do they have homes? It hurt the Southern economy, so they created a program where you could lease, or rent, a convict to pay less for labor."

At North Campus, a ninth grade Ethnic Studies English class is continuing their study of *The Hate U Give*. As students enter, the aim for the class is projected on the board: *Why is white feminism disruptive and racist?* Below the question is a picture from the 2017 Women's March. Three white women are on their phones, while a black woman holds a sign reading, "Don't forget: White women voted for Trump." The students take four minutes to capture a few sentences about what is happening in the image. "The white women are all taking selfies or on their phone, but the black woman looks angry," one student says. "It looks like the white women are just there to look good, but the black woman is fighting for her rights," adds another. The teacher, Mark Leff, asks how this connects with their text. "The students at Williamson said their protest was to support Khalil and his family. They were all acting like they knew him and cared, but really they were just trying to get out of class," says one student.

For the next ten minutes, students work in groups to read a short text about a problem with white feminism, summarize it, explain why it is racist, and come up with examples of this problem from the text and their lives, and then share out with the class. The group with "Upholding Colorblindness" explains, "It is racist because it is shaming their true identity, not respecting a person's experience. It's insidious because it sounds positive to say you're colorblind." The "White Savior Complex" group shares, "This is similar – white women come and save the black women, and the black women can't do it themselves. They have no space and no voice." The "Intent versus Impact" group adds, "This is a problem because white people aren't being held accountable if they make a mistake." Before being dismissed from class, students complete an exit ticket, answering the question: *Many white feminists don't realize they are being racist; they think they are fighting for justice. How would you explain the problems with their beliefs?*

HPS students in Ethnic Studies say these courses are more engaging and interesting than their other classes. Brianna, an 11<sup>th</sup> grader, explains, "It helps us learn where we come from and come together, unite. We learn about the history of Holyoke and Puerto Ricans." Izaak, another 11<sup>th</sup> grader, adds, "It isn't just about the dominant culture in history, we learn about blacks, Haitians, Latinos." Javier, a 9<sup>th</sup> grader, says, "My mind blows up when I learn some of the things in class like when I learn about the unequal distribution of wealth in the U.S." According to the students, this level of connection with their curriculum makes them excited to attend school. "With Ethnic Studies, I don't dread coming to school. I've seen a traditional history class and I was not for it. I see why other kids hate coming to school. If they could

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– Michaela, 9<sup>th</sup> Grader

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find out they have a sense of community, could learn about this stuff, kids wouldn't want to drop out," Michaela, a ninth grader, explains.

Students who participate in the Ethnic Studies program "grow a vocabulary to name what they are experiencing and seeing. They can talk about injustice and how it looks in different communities outside school," says Altshuler. "They also feel more prepared to act against those social injustices. It is a change in how history is taught, while in traditional History courses people of color, LGBTQ folks and women are rarely seen as primary actors in the nation's history, in Ethnic Studies these groups are brought into the center." 9<sup>th</sup> grade student Michaela adds, "In Ethnic Studies we learn not just about systems of oppression, but also about ways of resistance and how people of color and marginalized groups have responded to oppression. One student said, "we identify things that happen but we can also create change and break out of the system."

Students have the opportunity to begin making these changes in their classroom. "In classes we do a lot of research. We have circles to talk about community problems and problem-solve," says Will. "We also learn that one voice alone won't make a change. MLK didn't make change by himself – he had a whole community behind him," Brianna adds. "Ethnic Studies taught us about the real world and about problem solving. It is the only class that's taught me to realize there are social problems and I need to fix them," Damian, an 11<sup>th</sup> grader, explains. Students are also taking these skills into their communities. Izaac says, "The work through ethnic studies taught us how to build communities, build connections, help people as they help us, too." Will adds that they hope the community recognizes that "We're here to make a change, HHS isn't just students who are always trying to break rules."

One critique of the program shared by Altshuler is that initially, the ethnic studies program was really insular: while teachers, principals, and students were aware of the program, community members were not centered in the work. For the past 3 years working with local historians, local organizations and community members has become a focus of the work. "We want parents, students, and teachers to be equally invested in this program and say it is important and demand it lives on, despite challenges in an ever-changing district under Receivership," Altshuler explains.

"It's so important, especially in high school. We're all trying to figure ourselves out and this class really helps you self-reflect and have a safe space to openly express yourself. In Ethnic Studies, these are the teachers I can connect with and express myself to because they'll listen. We've built a connection."

– Jolimar, 9<sup>th</sup> Grader

Students are very invested in seeing the Ethnic Studies program continue to expand. "Ethnic Studies should be for everyone. That should be our curriculum." One student explained that everyone should know about diverse people, cultures and problematic systems. "You can't be stuck in denial," Will says. Jolimar, a ninth grader adds, "It's so important, especially in high school. We're all trying to figure ourselves out and this class really helps you self-reflect and have a safe space to openly express yourself. In Ethnic Studies, these are the teachers I can connect with and express myself to because they'll listen. We've built a connection." Michaela is certain that Ethnic Studies will help her have an impact on her community throughout her life. "I've learned that just because I'm young doesn't mean I don't have a voice. Just because my identity was pushed aside doesn't mean it isn't valid. I can express myself and not apologize for it. I am able to show others I have a voice and I'm able to help other people."

Altshuler is excited about the growing community connections happening through Ethnic Studies, its continued expansion at the high school, and expansion beyond high school classrooms via Dual Enrollment opportunities through Holyoke Community College's Latinx Studies program and Westfield State's Ethnic and Gender Studies program. However, Altshuler and the students realize that hiring and retaining strong Ethnic Studies teachers continues to be a challenge. "A challenge every year is teacher turnover and it is a challenge finding teachers with a background or exposure to ethnic studies," Altshuler explains. "It is a different kind of pedagogy that centers community and relationships, and it is challenging to implement the curriculum without that understanding." Students emphasize that this pedagogy is essential to the impact of Ethnic Studies. Izaac says, "Teachers should know

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their community, they should be aware of where their students are from. Our Ethnic Studies teachers are so open with us, they create a space so it is easy to express ourselves. It feels like we're all learning together as we go." Will adds that the Ethnic Studies course could be more successful with "more teachers of color representing Ethnic Studies and our school." Altshuler explains, who teaches Ethnic Studies matters and school leaders who are charged with hiring must know what Ethnic Studies is and believe in the work to fill these positions responsibly.

### NEXT STEPS AT HOLYOKE HIGH SCHOOL

While students cite the Ethnic Studies Program and Pa'lante as essential spaces in their school to create and celebrate community, they also recognize that they can, at times, feel siloed from the rest of the school. "Some teachers still think this work isn't important, or that we're being dramatic," Nashley explains.

According to Lily Newman, the Associate Principal at North Campus, culturally responsive practices "are not system-wide yet," but the new administration is working to provide more professional development to its staff. "We started small in our PD this Spring," Newman says. "In our August PD, we focused on the tenets of culturally responsive teaching and had students come in and talk about their experience, what they hope to get from teachers." In the upcoming year, Newman says, they will go deeper into culturally responsive pedagogy and curricular materials, and will have Pa'lante student leaders present to their teachers about restorative justice. "These students go out and train other teachers across the Valley and beyond. We want them training our teachers."

Newman is also working to increase the diversity of her teaching staff to better reflect the student population. "I'm emphasizing to the hiring team best practices around recruiting and selecting for diversity – we need to see people, meet people, and talk to people."