

# Equity and Inclusion

Meridian educates global citizens in an equitable, inclusive, and increasingly diverse community.



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October 12 2020

## INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S DAY 2020

Seattle is one of the cities in the United States that celebrates Indigenous People's Day instead of Columbus Day. At Meridian, we embrace this celebration and educate our students about the reasoning behind it.

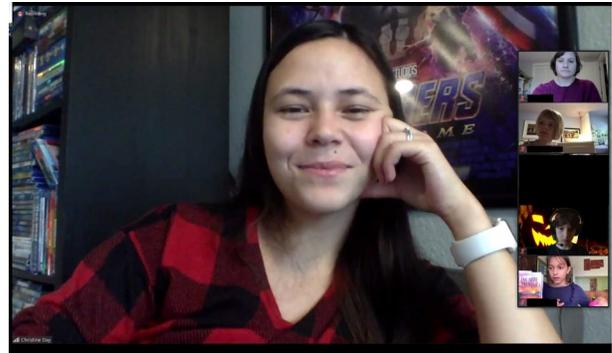
*Indigenous Peoples' Day is a holiday celebrated on the second Monday of October in the United States, in lieu of Columbus Day. Indigenous Peoples' Day, at its core, aims to celebrate and honor the past, present, and futures of Native peoples throughout the United States and acknowledges the legacy of colonialism, which has devastated Indigenous communities historically and continues to negatively impact them today. More importantly, however, Indigenous Peoples' Day moves beyond the narrative of oppression and honors the histories, cultures, contributions, and resilience of contemporary Native peoples. [For Our Future: An Advocate's Guide to Supporting Indigenous People's Day](#)*

Many of us grew up thinking that Christopher Columbus was a hero who discovered America. Many of us could name Columbus, but many of us could not name the tribes that were already here, and the way they were impacted by Columbus' arrival. Even today, most states still celebrate Columbus Day.

*Columbus's treatment of the Taino people meets the UN definition of genocide. But there has also been a curricular genocide – erasing the memory of the Taino from our nation's classrooms. How else can we explain students' universal recognition of Columbus and almost total ignorance of the name Taino? As we work to replace Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples' Day in our communities and schools, let's work to remember the people who were here first. Their lives mattered 500 years ago, and they matter today. [Whose History Matters? Students Can Name Columbus, But Most Have Never Heard of the Taino People](#)*

Students should explore history understanding the perspective of who is offering the narrative. They must learn from unheard voices and untold stories. Since "untold stories" are not usually in the mainstream media, it requires great intentionality to bring them into the classroom and our homes. We are constantly looking for primary sources, connecting with local communities, and searching for books from publishers that are known for offering and valuing diversity.

We are also making sure that Indigenous Peoples are represented in our curriculum and book collections.



### Celebration 2020

This year, our celebration started at our Friday Morning Meeting on October 2nd with our guest, local author Christine Day who shared with us about her latest book *I Can Make this Promise*. Christine is an enrolled citizen of the Upper Skagit tribe (pronounced SKA-jit.) Her mother is of Upper Skagit and Nooksack descent, and her father is of Northern European (mostly Norwegian) descent. Her book, *I Can Make this Promise*, was a best book of the year from Kirkus, School Library Journal, NPR, and the Chicago Public Library, as well as a Charlotte Huck Award Honor Book, and an American Indian Youth Literature Award Honor Book.

### Meridian READS: Families Book Club Series

In collaboration with our librarian Aimee Miles, the E&I Team is putting together a Meridian Families Book Club series. We will start with a focus on Indigenous People. Soon, we will send a link to RSVP for family conversations in mid-December. Here are the books for the fall:

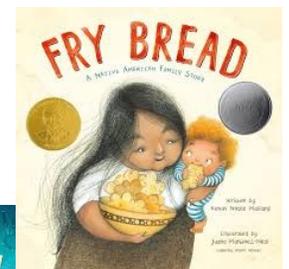
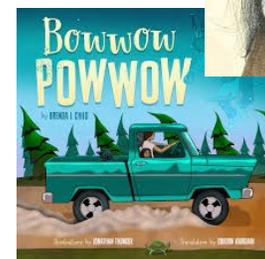
#### Kindergarten to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade:

[Fry Bread](#) by Kevin Noble Maillard and Juana Martinez-Neal

[BOWWOW POWWOW](#) by Brenda J. Child

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> -5<sup>th</sup> grade:

[I Can Make this Promise](#) by Christine Day



## RESOURCES

### [AN ADVOCATE'S GUIDE TO SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY](#)

[Seattle Chooses Indigenous Peoples' Day](#)

Here is a video for children with a song that highlights the change from Columbus to Indigenous People's Day: [One Earth, One People, One Love](#)

See our Meridian [E&I Padlet](#) for books and more resources.