



A Communication Link Between Our Students, Faculty, & Administration

School Year 2022-2023, Semester 1



“A bridge is a device that supports the strings on a stringed musical instrument and transmits the vibration of those strings to another structural component of the instrument — typically a soundboard, such as the top of a guitar or violin — which transfers the sound to the surrounding air.” -Wikipedia

This Semester's
TOP STORIES

Core Equity Team Times

The Core Equity Team, or CET, was established in 2020 and has historically driven efforts focused on fostering ASA community awareness of systemic inequity and building a school culture that celebrates all community members.

Our current task in this three-year development plan is to evaluate our institutional position on diversity, equity, and inclusion, or DEI, and lay some groundwork from which to build our value system and shape a sustainable and equitable culture and climate. Expanding upon the work begun last year, we are now compiling resources that will provide all stakeholders with transparent guidelines, clear definitions used in practice, and insight into the humanistic approaches centered in restorative work. Administrators and faculty are carefully implementing restorative practices with the guidance and leadership of Elma Džanić Bass who is on campus several days a week.

Intro to Elma Džanić Bass

Elma has been a significant leader in urban education for over 15 years. A former high school English teacher, Restorative Justice Director, and district-level administrator, Elma has instituted transformative policies that address disproportionate discipline practices, behavior and mental health interventions, and school culture and climate. She is a dynamic facilitator, a passionate advocate for students, a bold systems leader, and a relationship-centered restorative practitioner.



A: Everyone who comes into this school should be able to have 3-4 teachers that you know have your back, that you can rely on, that are warm, kind, and love you. That when you walk into your classroom you feel like you have a community. So that when harm happens, it's then easy to talk about how to restore back since we have a sense of what to restore back to.

Q: Describe the process of restorative justice in our community.

A: First of all, it's really hard to restore if there's nothing to restore back to. The most beautiful part of this work is community building and relationship building work. In this first semester, part of what I've been doing with teachers is a lot of professional development to give them tools to build authentic connections with students and create classrooms that feel safe and inclusive. Then at the administrative level helping ASA think about when things go wrong, what is our approach. Currently, whether it be a harm that happens in a classroom, student to staff, or student to student, we pull parties in individually and have a restorative conversation with every human involved. To begin, we give space and time for each of those voices to be heard and to express what's going on. Then, if it's an interpersonal conflict, we'll come together to find the root of what's going on. At its basics, a restorative conversation looks like these four questions: What is your perspective? How did this make you feel or how did it impact you? Tell me what you need to move forward? What are you willing to give?

Interview with Elma by Maddie Yang

Q: What does restorative justice mean to you and what drew you to restorative justice?

A: I had a deep desire to figure out how to help communities come back together in the aftermath of harm, particularly in places and spaces that experienced war or genocide. That is because I, myself, was born and raised in Bosnia during a war. My family came here in 1995 and I was really sad to see how much the war damaged the essence of who we were as a community and as a culture. So I studied human rights and peace building. What really stood out to me was the restorative justice model adopted by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, Ubuntu, I am because we are.

When harm happens, we have to find a way to heal that harm and restore those relationships.

To me, restorative justice is providing a vehicle and practice for people to come back together, address the harm that has occurred between communities and use the space to express needs in order to heal. You have to love people very well and know that relationships and communities are essential to the growth of society.

Q: What does restorative justice look like in a school setting?

The implementation of restorative practices is generally new to most educational institutions, but for the few that are committed to utilizing them, there are tangible results. The CET is currently researching RJ models used in schools across the United States. From these models we are determining what is important to ASA, as a foundation for building our own framework.

This year, the Team is focused on the following goals:

1. establishing and communicating a set of shared terms and definitions that will be understandable and easy to use for all members of our community, for students at all grade levels, faculty and staff, parents, and board members;
2. addressing equity concerns in ASA’s accountability practices (specifically looking at disciplinary strategies and how to center restorative justice within our disciplinary framework), and;
3. integrating diverse, responsive, and inclusive teaching practices and curriculum across all grade levels (specifically looking at centering equitable pedagogical practices at all levels of instruction).

Core Equity Team Introductions

The CET is comprised of eighteen members including two student representatives, a member of ASA’s board of directors, a parent representative, senior leadership, and ASA faculty members. Each member has shared a brief statement about their role and reasons for their commitment to this work. Below you can read statements from each team member, and learn what brings each of them to this work.

Name	Who You Are and Why You Are on CET
<p>Monica Sauer Anthony</p>	<p>As the Dean of Arts and member of CET, I work on challenging our curricular techniques to be more diverse, equitable, and relevant. I love to ask the questions that challenge us to go further with our learning, practice, and to keep students at the center of our work.</p>
<p>Lucille Berk</p>	<p>I am the 6th grade Life Skills teacher. I graduated from ASA in 2015 and being back I already see so many changes from when I was last here. I am a part of CET so I can be a voice in the continued progress ASA is making towards embracing and practicing equity across campus.</p>
<p>Kim Brown</p>	<p>This is my 7th year as the 11th grade US History teacher at ASA. I joined the Core Equity Team because I want to improve student experiences on campus and help bring positive change to the school.</p>
<p>Veronica Cons</p>	<p>I am the school Social Worker. I have always been passionate about helping others and making sure people's needs are being met. I am a member of the Core Equity Team because I want to be part of the positive change at ASA that is moving towards a diverse and equitable education system that meets students and staff where they are.</p>

Camille Dominguez	I'm the 7th grade Math teacher, a member of CET, and the moderator for MSQSU. I am on CET because I want to make ASA a place where students of color and LGBTQ+ folx are seen, heard and know they are important.
Leah Fregulia	As the Head of School, I am invested in building and constantly evaluating the quality of everyone's experience at ASA. Striving for equity is at the center of my commitment to our students, faculty, staff, and parents. Working with the CET, I hope to be a leader who listens with curiosity, learns from others, and fosters values centered on equity that is representative and reflective of our diverse community.
Liz Guzman	As the Percussion Instructor and a member of the Core Equity Team I am dedicated to creating and supporting an equitable academic and artistic learning environment for all students, teachers, and the entire ASA community.
Alex Laing	As a member of the Board of Directors, I'm here to serve ASA, learn alongside others, and support our community's growth and development towards equity.
Teresa Layden	My engagement in CET aligns with my practices as the 12th grade English teacher. I am invested in being part of a learning community that values all of its members and works to ensure that people feel that they are supported and belong.
Aiko Yamada Mancini	I've been teaching piano here at ASA since 2009. I'm biracial and grew up in a dual-culture Japanese American family. I'm on the CET because I'm passionate about our collective and continuing work to make ASA a place where all students are valued for who they are and receive what they need to reach their goals.
Byron Miles	I am the 9th grade French and Spanish teacher. I joined the CET to ensure that all students receive a well-rounded education and to reach their social potential.
Amalia Nevarez	I'm a senior at ASA, and I've been attending since 5th grade! I'm the president of ASA's Latine Student Union whose goals coincide with my reason for being on the CET: to improve the school experience for students of color and create an equitable learning environment.
Emma Popish	I am the Dean of Academics, and I am part of the CET to ensure that our classrooms and curriculums are representative of our whole ASA community. In addition, this work will help keep me accountable for my own equity work.
Melissa Rex	As the Production Manager for ASA Theatre and the instructor of design and production management (all highly collaborative and communicative engagements), I am committed to the work of the CET. I value open platforms for all people to be included, all voices to be heard, and for our students to engage in practices that create spaces in which everyone can find opportunity for positive growth and belonging.
Nonnie Shivers	I am a parent member of the Core Equity Team. My wife and I are parents to an awesome ASA 7th grader. I have a professional background in education and am an employment lawyer whose legal practice focuses on diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace, including as a national expert on LGBTQIA+ inclusion.

Liz Sparks	I teach 8th Grade Social Studies. After over a decade working in human rights, I am delighted to teach my content area to 8th graders. I am deeply committed to human rights principles and the way that I intend to ensure that they are centered in my classroom and on our campus is through our equity work on the CET.
Emma Wisehart	I am invested in the work of our Core Equity Team as the 9th grade Biology teacher because I want to help ensure that the future of ASA is an equitable one, for students, staff, and the entire ASA community.
Madeline Yang	I'm a senior at ASA and in my 8th year at the school! In my position as senior class president and president of Asian Student Union, I have a passion for advocacy and want to ensure equity for my peers and younger classmen.

ASA's Statement on Equity

Earlier this year ASA's Board of Directors adopted a new Equity Statement for our school that reflects our values and commitment to embedding diversity and inclusion in our school culture, teaching practices and curriculum. This new statement was created through a months-long collaboration effort led by members of the Core Equity Team that included faculty, staff, student, parent and the board of directors.

Visit the updated [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion page](#) (DE&I) on the ASA website where you can see our revised Equity Statement -- as well as the school's DEI goals and timeline, resources and back issues of *The Bridge*!

Student Corner

Middle School Queer Student Union

Welcome. It's the first and most important word we offer to those around us. The Middle School Queer Student Union (MSQSU) strives to be a welcoming place to all, but especially to members of the LGBTQIA+ community. We welcome you to learn a little about us through the following three questions:

What, exactly, is MSQSU?

In the words of students, it's a safe place to:

- Be yourself, no matter your race, gender, or identity
- Learn and grow without being pressured to label yourself
- Engage in nonjudgmental conversations, especially regarding LGBTQIA+ topics
- Connect with high school students in QSU to gain perspective.

Why does ASA need MSQSU?

Students at ASA deserve a space where they can feel safe in expressing their true selves without fear of being judged, whether they are out or not. They also deserve a space where they can ask questions of and learn about their community from members of the community. The MSQSU provides an opportunity to build community among people who might not get to know one another, otherwise.

What are our hopes and dreams for ASA and MSQSU?

We hope that ASA continues to build support for organizations like MSQSU and provide resources such as meeting space for people to engage with each other. We hope that ASA community members see MSQSU as a channel by which they can learn more about LGBTQIA+ issues. We hope that we provide students with mixed identities (e.g. Indigenous and Queer) a place where they can fully be all parts of self. Finally, we dream of a day when all of us are **welcome** to be who we are, wherever we choose to be.

Something to Share?

Do you have an article on a student activity or celebration to contribute? Please send the information to: thebridge@goasa.org



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