

## Middle School Affinity Groups

In the Middle School, formal and informal affinity spaces are created within the classrooms. Examples include teachers inviting children to group themselves based on a particular identifier, such as age, birth order, family structure, race, gender identity, and learning styles and needs. These groups are often led by facilitators with similar identities and experiences who have professional training related to their affinity. While providing these experiences, children begin to understand the benefits of an affinity group.

Race-based affinity groups are formally used in the spring for the Racial Justice & Advocacy (RJA) curriculum. First grade (6/7s) and second grade (7/8s) are together during the RJA program and families are encouraged to have conversations with their children at home as the groups are introduced to help young students select their racial affinity group. During early spring, families receive a survey to identify their child's affinity group. Often by fourth grade (8/9s), students self-select their own affinity group. There are three race-based groups for children in Middle School, all of which are designed to build a positive identity for every child:

- The **Kids of Color (KOC) Affinity Group** was founded in 1992 for children who identify as Black/African American/Caribbean/of African descent or ancestry, Hispanic and/or Latinx, Asian (East, South East, South) American & Pacific Islander, or Indigenous.
- The **Multiracial Affinity Group** was created in 2020 to support our growing number of biracial families and children who are experiencing multiple racial backgrounds by providing a time and space to process and celebrate their mixed culture.
- The **White Anti-Racist Affinity Group** is a place for White students to discuss and explore their experiences as White people living in a racist society.

The following three groups support children's identities around family structure and gender.

- **Gender Spectrum Alliance Club** starts meeting in the fall and continues education surrounding gender, gender identity, and gender expression. Students are actively co-creating a community that upholds and uplifts their growing understanding of self, allowing room for questioning and evolving identities. Children in third grade (8/9s) and fourth grade (9/10s) are invited to join at separate times and an open door policy is in place, which allows students to attend all or some meetings.
- **Banana Splits** is a group that meets once a month after school in the fall and supports students whose families are separating, separated, or divorced.
- **Adoption Affinity Group** begins in the fall and meets monthly in the mornings, as well as for potlucks and workshops provided by the parent Adoption Affinity Group.