Morning Meeting October 5, 2020

Next Monday, October 12th, the Northwest School and the City of Seattle will be celebrating Indigenous Peoples Day. October 12th is also the federal holiday Columbus Day. It’s important to acknowledge that in 2014, the Seattle City Council unanimously designated the second Monday of October as Indigenous Peoples Day and not Columbus Day, as it remains in some cities and states.

For Native Americans and many others, celebrating Columbus Day has been a painful and hurtful tradition. It conjures the violent history of colonial oppression led by European explorers, such as Columbus himself, without an acknowledgement of how this history has ramifications and wounds that still run deep today. Several other places across the United States celebrate Indigenous Peoples Day and have joined a growing movement to end the celebration of Christopher Columbus in favor of honoring Indigenous communities, their resiliency, and their traditions, and to acknowledge that they were here long before Columbus, and are still here today.

In honor of Indigenous Peoples Day, I want to repeat the land acknowledgement Meg shared with everyone during our first Community Meeting this year.

We respectfully acknowledge that, for those of us in Seattle, our Morning Meeting is taking place on occupied Coast Salish land and that The Northwest School is located on the homelands of the Duwamish people.

We pay respect to Coast Salish Elders past and present and extend that respect to their descendants and to all Indigenous people.

To acknowledge this land is to recognize its longer history and our place in that history; it is to recognize these lands and waters and their significance for the peoples who lived and continue to live in this region, whose practices and spiritualties were and are tied to the land and the water, and whose lives continue to enrich and develop in relationship to the land, waters, and other inhabitants today.

I hope you join me in considering next Monday as a day-on and not a day-off. One way to celebrate Indigenous Peoples Day this year is to view a live panel discussion, sponsored by the National Museum of the American Indian, with young Native activists from across the country. The panelists will be answering the question, “How do our memories of the past inform and influence the current racial and social landscape?” I’ve posted the link for viewing the panel discussion on the Morning Meeting Padlet. Please note that the website says it starts at 1 PM ET, which means it’s happening at 10 AM in Seattle.

[Link for panel]