

On January 31, Hanscom Middle School, with the generous financial support of the Lincoln School Foundation, hosted its partner school from the Lincoln campus for a joint assembly by Urban Improv. This improvisational group from Jamaica Plain engages today's youth in skits and scenarios that challenge their way of thinking and bring to light new perspectives as a means of helping young people tackle today's social challenges. Urban Improv was invited by HMS's 7/8 team as part of their "Faces of Inequality" unit. They directed skits based upon race and background culture, a critical facet in our inequality unit. During the skits, the Urban Improv team would pause the action and request volunteers to participate actively in helping the actors make decisions. This challenged students to see the action through the eyes of the perpetrator, victim, and bystanders of the aggressions. Our LMS and HMS volunteers were incredibly engaged and did a wonderful job!

We followed that action with smaller groups that paired an LMS advisory group of students with an HMS one and the smaller groups headed off to spaces to introduce themselves to each other through cultural background questions. This enabled our two campuses to find common grounds amongst each other while also continuing the discussions stimulated by the Urban Improv assembly. Finally, students closed with deep reflections on the assembly, noting the main idea, stating what they agreed with, and asking difficult questions as to what they can do next to tackle these ongoing, challenging social issues.

In joining the two campuses, the assembly allowed over 200 students from the two campuses to come together. It brought nine partners of teachers from LMS and HMS together to facilitate difficult, but enriching conversations, and with the Superintendent and local state Representative Ken Gordon in attendance, it brought not only our district's full attention, but our state's as well.



LMS and HMS students engage in a friendly opening activity of "Simon Says" guided by Urban Improv actors while Rep. Ken Gordon, Supt. McFall, LSF rep Tara Mitchell and others look on.



HMS teacher Howard Worona, LMS teachers Julie Reynolds and Sue Totten along with HMS and LMS students get ready for the Urban Improv joint assembly to begin.



HMS student Paije Angulo teaches Urban Improv actor Kevin that his microaggressions against actress Merle were not appropriate.



HMS and LMS students meet and discuss the assembly's lessons while also having a social moment to get to know each other.