

# JUSTICE FLOW

*A YWCA Girls Exclusive Advocacy Project*

## **What is Justice Flow?**

Justice Flow is the self-named Menstrual Advocacy Project created by members of the YWCA Girls Exclusive Program at Keith Middle School in New Bedford, MA. Justice Flow is dedicated to ending period poverty and educating youth and adults on menstrual health, access, and equity in New Bedford Public Schools.

## **What are the goals of Justice Flow?**

Justice Flow is about menstrual equity and education. The student creators of Justice Flow are advocating for New Bedford Public Schools to provide free pads and tampons in bathrooms in grades 6-12 and in nurses' stations at elementary schools.

## **How is Justice Flow going to achieve its goals?**

Justice Flow students are working with the New Bedford School Department, Leadership Southcoast, YWCA staff, and Keith administrators to develop a pilot program to provide free pads and tampons in a bathroom on each floor at Keith Middle School. The pilot will require students and staff to participate in separate workshops on menstrual health and hygiene.

The need for menstrual products continues even after the school day ends, so Justice Flow members and the YWCA are collecting pads and tampons to distribute to the Greater New Bedford Youth Alliance. These organizations will then provide access to free menstrual hygiene products for youth outside of school and during the summer months.

Members of Justice Flow are also participating in the statewide movement to achieve menstrual access for all in Massachusetts. Student members will be participating in hearings and legislative visits to express their support for S1272/H1959 "An Act to Increase Access to Disposable Menstrual Products in Prisons, Homeless Shelters, and Public Schools."

## **What is Period Poverty and why does it matter to the members of Justice Flow?**

Period Poverty is an issue that affects girls, transgender, and non-binary students nationwide and can deny students their right to an equal education. One in five girls are reported to stay home while on their monthly cycle. The girls of Justice Flow explain how it's often easier to just stay home than be at school while having their period. The wider impacts of Period Poverty include increased risk of depression, anxiety, and toxic shock syndrome, as well as loss of learning, all of which combine to hinder students' academic achievement and growth. Periods can be a major disruption to students' ability to achieve academically, and we believe that no one should have to miss school, risk their health, or compromise their dignity because of menstruation.