

EACH CHILD, EACH DAY...

≡ MENU



GEORGE FLOYD +

june 3, 2020 by eachchildeachdaywgsd

Dear WGSD Family,

Our community, our region, our country and our world are hurting. So are many of you. The world has once again witnessed the brutal execution of an innocent Black man, George Floyd. The police officers involved deserve to be punished to the fullest extent possible.

All over the world, people are protesting not only the killing of George Floyd, but the police killings of many other unarmed Black people over time. No different than the educational system (and many others), the criminal justice system is broken. Unlike a car that returns to full functionality after the repair or replacement of a broken part, systems designed to benefit some and not all, require dismantling and rebuilding. I'm not saying that all police officers are bad or all educators are bad, but they (we) operate within systems that, by their outcomes, clearly privilege one race over another. It's undeniable.

To our Black family members, I can't begin to imagine the physical and mental toll of living life in a society so steeped in racism. I can't imagine the exhaustion and worry you have yourself, and that you feel for your family and loved ones. And it's so unfair that I can't.

To our White family members, it's essential that our actions match our stance when it comes to addressing racism in our homes, workplaces, community and in ourselves. While many of us are quick to judge and express outrage at a criminal justice system that harms, and even kills, African Americans on a regular basis, it's critically important to demonstrate the same level of outrage and advocacy within our spheres of influence and control. If we only express disgust and outrage when innocent Black men and women, adults and children, are brutally killed "in front" of us, then we're doing more harm than good. If we curse and criticize the criminal justice system's brokenness that led to the killings of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Aubrey, George Floyd and countless others, yet fail to see the same level of brokenness in the systems in which we live and work, then we're doing more harm than good. If we cast blame and condemnation on others without acknowledging the role we play in perpetuating such systems, we do more harm than good.

As your superintendent and as a white man, I must hold myself and our school system to a greater level of accountability in how we see and support our Black children, staff and parents and how our work is leading to the dismantling of the inequitable systems and structures within our district. The success and well-being of our Black children can be the only barometer of our progress, not efforts. Clearly, we have much work to do and we will.

With care,

John

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