



Fwd: [7th Grade Parents] [All District Information] Message About Recent Events

Sat, Jun 6, 2020 at 8:38 AM



Begin forwarded message:

From: Kaine Osburn <osburnk@avoca37.org>
Date: June 1, 2020 at 8:53:01 AM CDT
To: Kaine Osburn <osburnk@avoca37.org>
Subject: [7th Grade Parents] [All District Information] Message About Recent Events
Reply-To: osburnk@avoca37.org

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The recent events across the country, starting with the death of Geroge Floyd at the hands of police in Minneapolis, are painful to witness and admit as a too familiar part of the experience of African Americans and other minorities in the United States.

I know you share my outrage at such injustice and a desire to take action to keep it from continuing.

As the leader of the district, I just want to talk about the current moment, then other steps that have already started to do what we can to ensure that Avoca is a learning community that welcomes and supports every learner.

Earlier in this school year, the Board of Education revised its Legacy Statements, meant to identify for what the Board would be remembered when its work was done. Among the revisions was this:

We valued children foremost and supported the practices and services to further their academic, social, emotional and physical well-being, including our community's racial, ethnic, linguistic, gender, and learner diversity.

That statement of value and inclusion propels beginning steps we have taken, including increased racial awareness and justice training for staff, making diverse and inclusive materials part of the curriculum adoption selection, working with the Diversity & Inclusion parent group to bring a S.E.E.D. ([click here](#)) group to Avoca in the 2020-21 school year, including in our strategic plan for improving our Continuum of Services, a training component on Culturally Responsive Teacher, and a concerted effort to hire new staff that reflect our community's diversity. Additionally, individual teachers are regularly taking steps through class readings and assignments to develop more inclusive and insightful learning experiences for our students.

None of this is enough to bridge the racial gap in our country, but doing this and taking more steps will help bridge that gap in our community. We will take more steps in the coming school year.

Right now, today, your child might feel traumatized by what they have seen or heard about what is happening - whether to George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, or others. Likewise, the aftermath, the frustration that many have expressed publicly, can be upsetting to witness.

There is no simple way to respond today, except with empathy, an intent to listen, and steadfast support for justice. Our teachers will be on the lookout for any student or colleague in distress, and many will check in to reflect on what has happened and if any students are upset or want to talk about what they

have heard or witnessed. Please let us know if you think your child is particularly upset. Likewise, if we see that your student is distressed, we will reach out and let you know.

The Avoca community is in a unique position to address these challenges. With only a week left in the year, right now we need to listen and support. Please know that already steps are being taken to do more, and we will persevere in those steps going forward.

Sincerely,

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Kaine Osburn, Superintendent
Avoca School District 37
[@AvocaOsburn](#)