



June 4, 2020

Dear District 35 Parents and Staff,

We reach out today with a heavy heart as the tragic death of George Floyd due to police misconduct has brought racial injustice and violence front and center in our lives again. The images of Mr. Floyd's killing and peaceful protests, juxtaposed against those of violent looting have created an intense moment across our nation. What we do next has the power to make this more than just a moment, but rather an opportunity for profound change.

Within our strategic planning process, deepening inclusion was named by parents, staff, teachers, and stakeholders as a critical priority. Deepening inclusive practices and explicitly addressing racism will ensure a safe environment for ALL students and staff. Our efforts must also include a renewed focus on diverse and anti-racist curriculum in our lessons so our children are educated, informed, and able to learn from our shared history. Our mission clearly states our commitment to developing each child as a *socially responsible member of a global society*. We have work to do to ensure our actions reflect this mission.

As our school year ends, we have heard from parents and staff asking for ways to engage and use this time to honestly reflect on our role in future change. As we plan for the 2020-2021 year, our staff members will be engaging in additional anti-bias training, participating in a summer book study, and reviewing new resources to expand our culturally responsive literacy resources at all grade levels. We recognize we can and MUST do more to engage our entire school community in positive change.

As a parent, it can be difficult to know how to start a conversation about race with your child. We know the importance of talking with children honestly and often while using age-appropriate language. Below are several resources we hope you will find helpful to support these conversations in your home:

- [31 Children's Books to Support Conversations on Race and Racism](#)
- [Embrace Race](#)
- [How to Talk to Kids about Race and Racism](#)
- [Five Ways to Reduce Racial Bias in Your Children](#)
- [Anti-Defamation League: Tools & Strategies for Talking About Race](#)

Should you seek to engage and consider ways to help communities that have suffered devastation due to the pandemic and the recent riots and looting, [click here to learn how you may offer support](#) to *Imagine Englewood If* in a local collection which ends tomorrow. Click [here to see details of a Walk for Justice](#) that is scheduled for June 6th in Winnetka.

District 35 remains committed to equity and we pledge to continue working to change the narrative by building a sense of hope for our children and articulating a vision for the future that is compassionate, supportive, and inclusive.

I thank you for joining our District 35 staff members in this work.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Catherine Wang". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping "W" at the end.

Superintendent