



SUMMIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Summit Board of Education 14 Beekman Terrace Summit, NJ 07901-1702 908-273-3023

June 4, 2020

Dear Families of Summit Public Schools,

I hope this letter finds you and your loved ones healthy and safe. The current events happening around our country have brought a wide range of emotions and deep thought. Together, we cannot miss our opportunity to address the realities that have been brought further into focus. I emphatically state that the Summit School District unequivocally condemns racism, hatred, and injustice, and that silence simply cannot be an option.

The death of George Floyd was devastating, and remains very difficult to process. The tragedy of his death, as well as many other incidents of violence against Black people, has ignited long overdue conversations about systemic and institutionalized racism. The peaceful protests happening around the country have been very powerful and in turn, are inspiring communities to reflect and demand change. As this has deeply impacted so many of us, this is also confusing and troubling for our students. I want the families and students of our community to know that we are here for you, and we are ready to help.

One of the key points of the District's mission is to promote pride in diversity. Our staff members commit to upholding this value with our students both inside and outside the classroom. Now more than ever, I feel it is vital to recognize education as the foundation for a generation of leaders who are dedicated to creating an equal and just society. Our educators teach our students to speak up when they see injustice, which is why I am extremely proud of the students who independently organized and attended the influential peaceful protest in Summit on Tuesday. We will continue to facilitate these critical conversations and lessons with our students, and support their decision to use their voices in a peaceful manner. Below you will find resources that may be useful in guiding conversations at home, and please do not hesitate to contact your school counselor for additional resources and support.

[Beyond the Golden Rule: A Parent's/Guardian's Guide to Preventing and Responding to Prejudice](#)

[Healthychildren.org: Talking to Children about Racial Bias](#)

[American Psychological Association: How To Talk To Children About Difficult News](#)

[Sesame Street in Communities: Community Violence](#)

We are a strong community, and we accept our responsibility to grow even stronger for generations to come. As a District, we practice reflection regularly with the goal of continuous improvement. It is incumbent on all of us to reflect and consider how we can be better. We will continue to grow, and we will tirelessly pursue a welcoming environment that promotes pride in diversity, acceptance, and inclusion.

Sincerely,

Robert Gardella
Acting Superintendent of Summit Public Schools