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Superintendent



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June 1, 2020

Dear Pendergast Staff and Families,

Our district has always cared deeply about its students, staff, families, and the communities we serve. At times like these, we are conscious of not just our community but also the greater community we are connected to and take seriously our charge to actively work against systemic racism and injustice. While I did not personally know them, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and countless other Black lives lost remain in my broken heart. We stand up for and stand ready to act to preserve their dignity and their legacy and to ensure that the Pendergast Community moves forward with empathy and a common purpose to end institutional racism.

We know this is not new. Violence against Black people has existed during my entire lifetime and many generations before. Yet the injustice continues and leaves me concerned for our students, our staff, our community, our world. This must stop!

I condemn and will not tolerate racism in any form. Now, more than ever, we must strengthen our efforts to stand by all people and treat all with the respect and love we want for ourselves. As we move forward together in our continuing efforts to improve our curriculum, programs, and student supports, we will work to ensure we create an inclusive environment that allows every child to thrive.

We teach our students the tenants of the Be Kind character education program that are to be encouraging, supportive, positive, helpful, honest, considerate, thankful, responsive, respectful, and to be a friend. We teach our students to show empathy when they Speak Up, Stand Up, and Save Lives. Recent events remind us how important this work is, and call for us to use any positions of privilege we might have to hold one another and the greater community accountable when they don't live up to those ideals. The time is now.

To our Black colleagues and community members, please know we love you, we respect you, and stand by you. To our Black students, please know that we truly BELIEVE in you!

We believe in and support our staff for speaking out against injustice and working to end structural racism. It is part of our Pendergast DNA. The time is now.

I challenge each of you to connect with each other, to reach out, and join us in speaking out against injustice and structural racism. Look at the miracles we have done connecting during this pandemic. The time is now.

Our hearts are with those who have been hurt and we look for brighter days ahead with a hope for justice and a mission towards equality, unity, and mercy for all. The time is now. In the compelling words of Dr. Martin Luther King, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

I believe in you.

Peace,

Dr. Lily Matos DeBlieux
Pendergast District Superintendent