



June 3, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians and Elizabeth Community Members:

As individuals and collectively, we are saddened by the recent death of George Floyd and the senseless deaths of far too many people of color that have suffered at the hands of authorities whose mission is to protect. Continuing economic disparities, healthcare inequalities and opportunity gaps remind us that our ongoing work to ensure equity is vital.

While we celebrate diversity in our schools, we must encourage those outside of our schools to take the necessary steps to remove the obstacles and practices that contribute to systemic racism. Our Black students, staff and communities must be guaranteed safety.

Elizabeth Public Schools unequivocally believes that students can learn and achieve at high levels regardless of race, ethnicity, culture, neighborhood, household income or home language. We are committed to closing the achievement gaps and ensuring the achievement of all students through a comprehensive array of programs, strategies and community partnerships.

The Elizabeth Board of Education and Schools Administration works hard to ensure that everyone in the Elizabeth Schools Community learns and works in an environment where they are treated with dignity, respect, compassion and humanity. The Elizabeth Public Schools District is meeting the NJ Amistad legislative mandate and we are committed to continuing to guide the district's movement toward increased implementation of the mandate in every single classroom.

As we do our part, we urge everyone to learn the history behind racism in America. We support the demands for change. We will continue to fulfill our role as educators to teach and model imperative qualities to our students. In the words of the great President Nelson Mandela, who courageously led the resistance to end apartheid in South Africa: "Education is the most powerful weapons which you can use to change the world."

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We stand with the family of George Floyd and every person of color that died before him as a result of these deplorable acts. We oppose police brutality and racism. We stand with our students, staff and community during these dire times. We reaffirm our solidarity with our Black students, staff and the Black community. You matter. Black Lives Matter. We see you. We support you. We love you.

We cannot be silent in this moment, because, as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said: “Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”

Sincerely,

Diane Barbosa, Board President
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