

June 4, 2020

Dear Oregon School District Families,

The Oregon School Board and administrative leadership are appalled and outraged by the tragic death of George Floyd, as it is yet another symbol of the systemic racism that continues to exist in our nation today. This and other senseless acts of violence against children, adults and families of color must stop.

Our nation has struggled to address these issues and we acknowledge that more learning and work needs to be done nationally and right here in our own school community.

The truth is that we have significant racial issues in the Oregon School District that need to be addressed. Too often we hear about experiences our students have to endure because of the color of their skin and how our actions have not resolved these issues.

As a school system, we exist to support the academic and social-emotional growth of our young people and help community members of all ages continue to learn. Our five values, including whole child emphasis and educational equity, commit us to this important obligation — every student deserves an education environment in which they can achieve their potential without having to climb over systemic hurdles or face unimaginable road blocks.

To be clear to our families and students of color: you are valued and respected members of our school community, and you belong here. We will continue our work with you and valuable community partners like Nehemiah-Center for Urban Leadership Development, the National Equity Project and Critical Consciousness, LLC to listen, learn, and understand your experiences and what needs to change.

To those whose actions are counter to this commitment and our Oregon School District values, racist behavior is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

We have and we continue to take steps to address issues of institutional bias and racism in our district. These include significant study and discussion among our faculty about racism, making changes to our curriculum to eliminate institutional biases, developing a professional learning pathway devoted to equity, and empowering our

students through the establishment of a Black Student Union at OMS and Multicultural Student Union at OHS.

However, we need to do more. Starting immediately, we will be taking the following action to effect accountability and change in the effort to eliminate racism and unequal treatment in our school community:

- Adopt an Oregon School District anti-hate speech policy that will clearly outline behavioral expectations for our students and staff and provide penalties for those who do not comply with these expectations. We will finalize that policy prior to the start of the new school year;
- Continue work with staff on developing an anti-racist culture and learning environment;
- Educate and empower our students and their families to identify and act on social injustice;
- Design learning experiences that are inclusive and culturally relevant;
- Continue to work with the Nehemiah Center for Urban Leadership Development, the National Equity Project and Critical Consciousness, LLC to more fully understand and act upon institutional and other forms of racism in our district.

Each one of us — students and their families, teachers, staff, administrators, school board, and the community — play a pivotal role in eliminating racism and unequal treatment of our students of color, and we must take action. In addition to the above action, we strongly encourage you to talk as a family about racism and being anti-racist. A list of resources to support families who have yet to engage in these conversations is available on our [District website](#).

Finally, as the leaders of the Oregon School District, we commit ourselves to ensuring that the above action steps go beyond words on a page. We ask for your active support as we work together to change the current systems and practices that contribute to systemic racism in our school community and beyond.

The Oregon School District Board of Education and Administrative Team