

The murder of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and countless other African Americans are a reminder of the long, painful history of the unjust treatment of African Americans in our country and I am heartbroken.

I had hoped that with the election of our first African American President, the removal of racist statues, and the love and passion that I see in so many of our students, that we were on the right path. I had hoped that we would eliminate institutionalized racism and white privilege and create a country where all are truly equal.

I had hoped that the world that we were building for my daughter and our young people would be a place where they would be accepted and cherished. I may be disheartened, but I am not deterred.

Racism against African Americans in our country must end. African Americans have been denied civil rights, high-wage jobs and homes to live in. They have been abused by police and those in authority. Longstanding cries or "taking a knee" for civil rights and human dignity have been slighted and ignored by politicians.

We need to look the problem square in the eye. The recent protests all over the country and the world are only a first step. Our country's injustices far exceed the videos captured by a few cameras. We need to commit ourselves--truly commit ourselves--to systemic change.

Beyond resolve, we need to stand up for what's right. So I begin with this clear statement to my staff, my students and my community. Black Lives Matter. You matter. And I am your ally.

More than that, I will guide the Eden Area ROP towards justice and peace for all our students. We will engage in policies and practices that amplify human dignity. We will protect and cherish each other. We will work for this each and every day.

At the Eden Area ROP, our mission is to prepare youth for future jobs and careers. By preparing our diverse student body for high-demand, high-wage jobs, we will take steps to eliminate the economic and class gaps that plague our nation.

Moreover, our job is also to help create good people, develop engaged citizens, and help build a better nation—one student at a time. In all of our classes, we build career knowledge and skills. But we will also develop the courage that it takes to live and work honestly, to right wrongs, and to accept and love each other like brothers and sisters.

This summer, we will begin our year with professional development that will emphasize human dignity and civil rights. I will work with our administration and staff to create a shared agenda that examines issues such as implicit bias, institutional racism, and white privilege. We will create strategies for an increased student voice. We will learn strategies for teaching a diverse student body and engaging in trauma informed instruction. This will take time. We will monitor our performance and continuously work to improve the delivery of education to our students.

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice." We renew our commitment to Dr. King's moral universe. We'll do this as we educate students towards careers and work to end economic injustice.

Sincerely,



Linda Granger