



June 2, 2020

Dear Burlington Families and Members of the Burlington Area Community,

On behalf of the Burlington Area School District, we offer our deepest sympathy and condolences to the family and friends of George Floyd. In an environment in which we work hard to build understanding and solidarity among students, parents, and staff, this is a truly sad time that serves as a call to action.

Every day, the Burlington Area School District seeks to develop the intellectual, physical, vocational, creative, cultural and social capabilities of our students. We want our students to always be safe at school. Today, we write to remind you that we are one district - and one community! While our hearts are heavy with concern, we want to ignite a spirit of hope for us as a community. Regardless of the extent to which the struggles of the modern day impact you, we, as a learning community, ought to be reminded of our obligation to one another.

Sadly, being insulted, marginalized, or feeling unsafe, unappreciated or unnoticed seems to be turning more commonplace. We recognize that people of color in our community experience racism. Some in our community are hurting...feeling isolated, targeted, or afraid...and don't know how to adequately process the unknown of what the future holds. With this in mind, we wish to reassure you that the Burlington Area School District staff cares deeply about each and every one of our students - regardless of the color of their skin, where they live, their household income, what their religious or political convictions are, what languages they speak, their gender identity, sexual preference or learning style.

Despite all of our beautiful differences and unique qualities, we are a community of learners. We support students in developing the confidence to speak their truth and nurture their character so they can show respect for those who may have opposing viewpoints. While silence can be dangerous, listening is a power that can bring us together.

As we move forward, we will create more opportunities to discuss the fear, anger, and frustration that this and past tragedies have uncovered. We will confront any inequities that have seeped into our culture to ensure that all feel equally valued.

Your active support is critical to make our community a safe place to live and learn. Thank you for your ongoing efforts to support all of our schools as we work for greater understanding in the Burlington Area School District. We all know that as a community, we need to build bridges between racial groups across the district.

On behalf of the Burlington Area School District and Board of Education
Dr. Stephen T. Plank, Superintendent of Schools