



BRISTOL BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Dear Bristol Public Schools Community,

Throughout the past weeks, as our district, state, and nation adjusted to the effects and impact of COVID-19, I have sent communications ranging from food resources or technology distribution to distance learning and health notifications. During this time, many of our friends and neighbors lost their jobs, or have grieved the loss of loved ones, all while caring for their families. The impact on our Bristol community is ours and ours alone, yet we watched as a stark and dramatically different impact of COVID-19 played out in communities of color throughout Connecticut and our country.

During this same period of time, we witnessed the senseless deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd. As a teacher, district leader, and citizen, I am equally heartbroken and angry, because the world for which BPS claims to be preparing our scholars for has broken the pact I believe is true: that all persons are to be treated with dignity, that good prevails over evil, and that community is built on the strengths and beauty of our differences as well as our similarities.

Each act of racism and evidence of systemic racism makes me ponder how we protect our children's innocence, their sense of joy and wonder, and most importantly their sense of safety. Our BPS Vision of the Graduate calls for us to ensure our scholars leave us with the agency to *meaningfully contribute in a rapidly changing global society*. This agency is reliant on their ability to recognize and confront the injustices of racism in all forms. I believe it is through our scholars' voices, sense of advocacy, and demand for equity that they will usher in and demand a better society for themselves.

Bristol Public Schools is committed to ensuring that all students regardless of race, nationality, ethnic group, primary spoken language, socioeconomic class, age, ability, exceptionalities, sexual orientation, family structure, or gender—have access to equal learning opportunities. Through our partnership with the Connecticut Center for School Change and the creation of our Equity Leadership Team, we are examining current and best practices to explore racial awareness and identity, create equity-centric classrooms and support the unique needs of each child in our classrooms. We have room to grow, we will make mistakes, but we are committed to improving. We can and we must.

As you and child consider recent events in our society, I urge you to take the time to discuss these events. Children look to us in times of upset; they ask questions that require answers. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends".

The resources provided below are for your reference, by no means are they exhaustive. Please know that our staff is available to you and your child. If you would like to talk with someone, please reach out to your child's teacher, school counselor, school psychologist, SELC, or any of their school administrators.

Social Justice (National Association of School Psychologists)

Talking to Kids About Discrimination (American Psychological Association)

[Beyond the Golden Rule](#)

As a district, and as a community we can be a part of the solution. Yesterday's peaceful protest in Bristol demonstrates the power of a community, its leaders and its police, all gathering for the cause of justice and good of all. We are BPS, We are Bristol All Heart.

In partnership,

Catherine M. Carbone, Ed.D.

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Superintendent of Schools

Jennifer Dube

Jennifer Dube
Board of Education Chair