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Council of the Great City Schools

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Statement on Slayings
By
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WASHINGTON – Like our fellow citizens across the country, America’s urban public school community grieves with the families in St. Paul, Baton Rouge, Dallas, Orlando and elsewhere who are victims of the nation’s recent surge of killings. And we grieve because the young men who have been shot—black, white and Latino—are part of our family, too.

Philando Castile was a 2001 graduate of St. Paul’s Central High School and worked as a supervisor in the school district’s nutrition services department.

Patrick Zamarripa, one of the Dallas police officers who was gunned down, was a graduate of Fort Worth’s R.L Paschal High School and had one child in the school system. He graduated from one of our schools the same year Mr. Castile did.

Alton Sterling, who was shot in Baton Rouge, was a father of five. And three of the victims of the Orlando nightclub massacre were graduates of the Orange County Public Schools.

These killings are personal to us, as were the shootings in Cleveland and Baltimore and Chicago and New York City and too many other urban communities. These are our students, our graduates, our employees, our brothers, our neighbors, our fathers, our husbands and partners, and our mentors.

We not only grieve for them all, but we understand our patriotic responsibility to teach tolerance, civility, and unity in a nation whose public discourse is becoming increasingly untethered from these values. In the face of these tragedies, the nation’s urban school leaders recommit ourselves to the work of advancing empathy and understanding and equity and justice and forbearance.

And we pledge to do everything we can to vigorously resist the forces of ignorance and fear and prejudice and hatred and revenge that are behind so many of these acts. We do not want to lose another member of our family or yours.

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