

SUPERINTENDENT CASSELLIUS'S MESSAGE TO BPS COMMUNITY IN RESPONSE TO NATIONAL EVENTS

Dear Boston Public Schools Community:

Over the last week, our nation has responded to the horrifying video footage of the murder of George Floyd while in police custody in my hometown of Minneapolis. This unspeakable event has triggered feelings of immense sadness and anger within the Boston Public Schools (BPS) community, in the City of Boston, and across the country. While this particular tragedy has caused deep pain for many of us, especially in our Black and Brown communities, we all know that this is just one incident among centuries of violent racism.

This anguish is being felt strongest in communities already disproportionately impacted by the COVID- 19 pandemic. We are experiencing civil unrest while struggling to adjust to this new reality of social distancing. I am incredibly thankful for the continued leadership of Mayor Walsh, who held a virtual prayer vigil Saturday afternoon with local clergy. We must create safe spaces to heal through these difficult times.

I am encouraging BPS educators to have age-appropriate discussions with students this week to share their feelings in response to the coverage they've seen. We also suggest families have open discussions to process their thoughts. Comprehensive mental health and crisis support resources and information for students and families are available [here](#).

Our virtual classroom conversations this week (resources can be found [here](#)), and related meetings for Central Office and school-based staff, are part of our ongoing efforts to foster safe, welcoming, culturally affirming learning and work environments where students and staff are respected and can thrive. We continue to examine every policy, curriculum, strategy, and decision through an equity lens, and we are committed to working every day to direct resources to meet our students' individual needs, with a focus on our students and families most in need.

We know that this tragedy and its aftermath have made a difficult period in all of our lives even more uncertain, and BPS is here for you. For resources for students and families, please visit bostonpublicschools.org or call the BPS

Family Helpline at 617-635-8873. The helpline is open Monday to Friday, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm, and support is available in 10 languages.

To achieve a long overdue societal shift in ending racism and building bridges between people of different racial and ethnic identities, we must advocate for change while also reaching to care for one another and striving to listen to those who are most impacted. We will get through this together.

In unity,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brenda Cassellius".

Dr. Brenda Cassellius
Superintendent