



Buffalo Public Schools
Office of Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Initiatives Statement
on the
Recent Killings of Unarmed African Americans
June 1, 2020

It was with great grief, confusion, and anxiety that we observed the national murder of Minneapolis citizen, father, and brother, George Floyd. This public dehumanization came at the hands of those who are charged with protecting, serving, and keeping us all safe. Compounding our national grief is the fact that this recent publicized racist attack followed several weeks of heightened awareness and dismay regarding other senseless killings of unarmed Black and Brown people that made international news, including the tragic deaths of Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor. These senseless tragedies occurred during the covid-19 global pandemic, while communities of color continue to suffer injustices and racism associated with disproportionate mortality rates, lack of access to healthcare, heightened policing, and the gaping digital divide experienced by students of color who must now navigate a new virtual education platform.

As we and our students engage in this national pain and trauma, old wounds are reopened as the Black community relives the intergenerational trauma dating back to 1619, of bondage, chattel slavery, jim crowism, lynching, economic inequities, housing inequities, police brutality, mass incarceration, educational neglect, hopelessness, an inability to have our voices heard, or to be afforded the basic rights of humanity. Hence, we have witnessed the mass public outcry to address these recent painful and traumatic killings played out on national television and social media in at least 20 states, and in multiple countries worldwide. This outcry has manifested as peaceful protest, demonstrations, and yes, even “riots” have occurred, which Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. framed as “the language of the unheard” in 1967.

While the George Floyd tragedy is horrific and unpalatable, it is a microcosm of national racial injustices that have plagued our country for generations and speaks to larger issues of inequalities and racism that is systemic and embedded in every social system of American society, including the consciousness of the American people.

In the Office of Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Initiatives, we are committed to providing a platform for students, teachers, parents, administrators and all stakeholders to raise their voices against inequalities, injustices, and racist tactics that are plaguing our country, our state and our city. Moreover, we are committed to providing culturally and linguistically responsive curriculum and resources which edify the voices of marginalized communities of color in our brick and mortar classrooms and on our virtual learning platforms. We appeal to each adult member in our District community to reach out to our scholars and their families at this difficult time in our history. Allow your interactions to be a healing space where you share your vulnerabilities and your strengths related to issues of race and racism and their negative impacts on us all. We have provided a few resources to get the discussions, artistry, reading, and writing started at the following link: Office of CLRI – Current Events & Courageous Conversations Webpage: <https://www.buffaloschools.org/Page/92665>.

Please check the CLRI website and Schoology Course for additional resources for culturally responsive dialogue and criticality related to these national current events in the coming days and weeks ahead.

Thank you.