

Dear ASD community,

The tragic killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and others like it, deepen my resolve for change as they have a profound impact on our students, staff, and the entire ASD community despite being thousands of miles away. These events and their repercussions affect us all in unique and personal ways.

While there is no easy solution to solving these long-standing, racial injustices, I am certain that education will always play a role. High-quality education for all students is one of the best forms of equity. As one of the most diverse school districts in the country, ASD has a tremendous responsibility to teach and model inclusion and equity to its students and staff. Within ASD, that starts with placing a caring, compassionate teacher in front of every student, honoring diversity, and treating everyone with dignity and respect, while ensuring educational achievement for all. This is no small task, but one for which we cannot afford to give up.

Learning to be open minded and respectful of diversity is a deeply individual lesson, requiring a lifetime of reflection and empathy. As adults, it is our job to model this behavior for our young people, as they WILL follow our example.

I encourage students, parents, and our staff to navigate and interrogate these recent events of racial injustice and inequity with open dialogue, patience, and empathy. They are never easy, but they are necessary.

If you see or hear of someone who is angry or hurting, reach out to them with an open heart. Sometimes just listening is the first step towards healing. ASD's helpline, 742-HELP, is also an excellent resource that can assist our community with a variety of needs.

As a white woman who has not experienced the full impact of this event in a historical context or personal understanding, I am somewhat apprehensive to share my thoughts. However, I felt it necessary to stand for students of color and share that as superintendent of ASD I will renew my commitment to the success of all children in light of the horrific event that took place in Minneapolis last week. All means all in ASD.

Sincerely,

Deena M. Bishop, Ed.D.
Superintendent