

Dear **#RPSStrong** Family,

Before diving into today's updates, I want to acknowledge the additional pain that is coursing through our community right now as a result of George Floyd's harrowing death at the hands of a white Minneapolis police officer. The similarity to the Eric Garner case, down to both men's cries – "I can't breathe" – is chilling, to say the very least.

Nearly 35% of RPS students are African-American young men. The America that they will experience over the course of their lives is fraught with racist prejudices – held consciously or not – that dehumanize them and make deaths like Mr. Floyd's not just possible, but common.

We must change that. Our responsibility as educators is so much more than just teaching reading and math. It's about preparing our young people with the knowledge, skills, and social capital they'll need to construct a better, more just world – and doing whatever we can as adults to pave the way for them.

Towards that end, I'd like to make a request of my fellow white members of the RPS community: If you haven't already done so, please discuss Mr. Floyd's death – and the long history of racialized violence that precedes it – with your children. Yes, it may be difficult. But families of color don't have much choice when it comes to "the talk" – it's literally a matter of life and death for them.

For the entire RPS Family, [here's a set of resources](#) for talking with young people about race, racism, and racialized violence from the Center for Racial Justice in Education.

Finally, to everyone who is processing this tragedy with great pain, please know that your RPS family stands with you – and always will.

With great appreciation,

Jason